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THE ORIGINS OF THE WAR OF 1870

NEW DOCUMENTS FROM THE GERMAN ARCHIVES

BY

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PREFACE

THE Franco-German War of 1870, like the World War of 1914, was preceded by a diplomatic battle lasting barely twelve days — from the "bursting of the Spanish bomb" at Paris on July 3, down to the virtual declaration of war in the French Chambers on July 15. The French side of the history of those agonizing twelve days is now comparatively well known, even in its details, thanks to the publications of Gramont, Benedetti, Ollivier, La Gorce, and others. But the German side is still bristling with unsolved problems. Bismarck's statements in his memoirs and oral reminiscences are notoriously unreliable and misleading; and the other sources hitherto available — chiefly the diaries of Busch, Abeken's papers, Keudell's memoirs, and the letters of King William and Prince Karl Anton of Hohenzollern — offer most imperfect clues to the mazes of this labyrinth. Hence, while imaginative writers have found here free scope for all manner of conjectures and hypotheses, numerous historians have longed for the day when the German government would at last consent to open its archives on a subject of such exceptional interest both to the German people and to the outside world.

Since the World War this aspiration has, in large measure at least, been satisfied. The archives of the German Foreign Office are now opened to historians to a degree, and with a liberality, that one would like to see emulated in every other country. In the past year I have had the privilege of using and of transcribing in full the seven volumes of documents which contain the German official record of the diplomatic crisis leading up to the outbreak of the War of 1870.[1] As these documents have never hitherto been printed (with very few exceptions), and have been seen by only a few investigators, it has seemed worth while to publish them, as a contribution to the history of a period so pregnant with fateful consequences.

[1] Hauptarchiv des Auswärtigen Amts. Abteilung A. *Akten betreffend die Berufung eines Prinzen von Hohenzollern auf den Spanischen Thron. Spanien. B. o. 32.*

In limiting the scope of this volume mainly to the weeks immediately preceding the war, I have been guided chiefly by the fact that not all the German documents bearing upon the origins of that conflict are yet accessible. The papers relating to the early history of the Hohenzollern Candidacy to the throne of Spain — papers which must excite the liveliest curiosity of all who have delved into that tantalizing historical mystery — down to the time when the question became public through the 'explosion' at Paris, are not yet open to investigators. I was told that these papers are reserved for a future official publication. But, even apart from this, it is clear that the time has not yet come for an attempt at a complete and definitive study of the origins of the War of 1870. The great official publication of the French government on that subject[2] is not yet half finished; and until its completion there will remain important gaps in our knowledge of French policy, not so much, perhaps, with regard to the crisis immediately preceding the war as in respect to the quieter earlier period. The British and Italian archives are not yet open at all. And any effort to trace adequately the remoter causes of the conflict would involve a study of all the German and also of the Austrian records from 1866 onward — obviously a *travail de longue haleine.*

This volume, therefore, deals chiefly with the diplomatic crisis immediately preceding the war and with the German side of that crisis. The most important series of texts here published begins with the first interpellation addressed by France to Prussia, on July 4, 1870, and closes with July 15, when, after the decisive events in the French Parliament and the ordering of general mobilization at Berlin, both sides had crossed the Rubicon.[3] Within these limits I have endeavored to reproduce virtually all the documents that were accessible to me. Only a very few have been omitted, as of slight importance; and a few have been

[2] *Les Origines diplomatiques de la guerre de 1870* (1910–21), 12 vols., going down to October 15, 1866.

[3] The French declaration of war was presented at Berlin only on July 19, but the issue of war or peace was definitively settled at both capitals on the 15th. Both for this reason and for lack of time while in Berlin, I did not include among my transcripts the German documents of the three intervening days.

abbreviated or summarized, rather than printed in full. Naturally, this collection does not include certain documents from the German side that one would like to have, such as the private correspondence of King William, most of which is still inaccessible in the Hohenzollern Private Archives, or the private papers of Bismarck, which may still, perhaps, be extant in the archives of Friedrichsruh. But I believe that it does contain a fairly exhaustive reproduction of the records of the German Foreign Office, on the subject and period in question.[4] Some documents from the Austrian and Spanish archives have been added, which help to explain either the early development of the Hohenzollern Candidacy or the events at Berlin in July, 1870. In the narrative which precedes these documents, I have endeavored to retrace the history of the crisis, chiefly from the standpoint of Prussian policy, in the light of the mass of new sources that have now become accessible.

I am under the deepest obligations to Herr Oberregierungsrat Dr. Conrad Meyer and to Herr Geheimrat Dr. Spiess for ready and kindly assistance in using the archives of the German Foreign Office; to Sr. D. Jerónimo Bécker, Director of the *Archivo del Ministerio de Estado* and to D. Antonio Ballesteros, *Catedrático de la Universidad Central*, of Madrid; and to the officials of the *Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv* of Vienna. I have received manifold aid in the preparation of this volume from my colleagues, Professors Edward Channing, A. C. Coolidge, W. S. Ferguson, and R. B. Merriman, of Harvard University. I should also like to express my indebtedness to a distinguished German scholar, whom I have not the privilege of knowing, but who has done more

[4] Among all the documents of that time whose existence has hitherto been known to us and which one would expect to find in the archives of the German Foreign Office, there are but very few that I failed to find, such as the telegram of Bismarck of July 11, suggesting too late that Werther should be prevented from going back to Paris (referred to in the *Life of Abeken*, p. 251), and the original draft of the Ems Telegram in the revised version, which Bismarck is supposed to have made out, pencil in hand, at the famous supper party on the evening of July 13.

Private and confidential letters, which ordinarily are so important in diplomatic intercourse, are singularly lacking here; but during the rapidly moving events of those exciting days it is probable that such letters played a very slight rôle, and that almost all business was transacted by the telegrams that appear in this collection.

than anyone else to clear up the history of the subject here treated, Professor Dr. Richard Fester, of the University of Halle. In the course of a volume based upon new materials, I have, inevitably perhaps, felt bound to differ from many of his views: but it is a duty to acknowledge the profit which I, like all the students of the subject, have drawn from his penetrating, laborious, and stimulating works.

ROBERT H. LORD

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
August, 1924

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NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

THE following abbreviations have been used in the footnotes of this volume:

B. A. ..... Hauptarchiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin.

M. A. ..... Archivo del Ministerio de Estado, Madrid.

V. A. ..... Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna.

Tg. ..... Telegram.

Fester, BA. ..... Fester, R., *Briefe, Aktenstücke, und Regesten zur Geschichte der Hohenzollernschen Thronkandidatur in Spanien.*

Fester, ED. ..... Fester, R., *Die Genesis der Emser Depesche.*

Each document in the archives of the German Foreign Office is usually classified according to three systems of numeration: it has attached to it a *Journalnummer*, a *Kontrollnummer*, and *Kanzleinummer*. As is customary, I have given in each case the *Journalnummer*, the most important for reference purposes in archive work (e. g. "A 2301"), whenever it was to be found. When, as often happened, it was lacking, the *Kontrollnummer*, the one most frequently mentioned in the despatches themselves, has been given (e. g. "[Kt.] No. 12"). When this too was lacking, I have had to fall back upon the *Kanzleinummer* (e. g. "[Kz.] No. 1109").

THE ORIGINS OF THE WAR OF 1870

CHAPTER I

THE QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE WAR OF 1870

AMONG all the wars that took place in Europe from the downfall of the first Napoleon to the world conflict of our day, the Franco-German War of 1870 was the most bitterly contested, the most sanguinary, the most dramatically decisive, and the most fateful in its consequences for the peace of the world. To the victorious nation it still represents the most glorious page in their history. In the minds of the vanquished it has rankled as no other disaster that has ever befallen them. Inevitably, the causes of, and still more the responsibilities for, the outbreak of this struggle have ever since been debated with an intensity of interest such as has seldom been aroused by any historical question.

As to the responsibilities of France, opinion is not very deeply divided. France was in the wrong, in the first place, in so far as she had since 1866 attempted to block the unification of Germany. In taking her stand on 'the line of the Main' and opposing the union of the South German states with the North German Confederation, she had been denying to the German people the right to settle their own affairs, in a way which, in spite of all extenuating circumstances, cannot be justified. It is true, on the other hand, that in 1870 this opposition was apparently weakening; that the French cabinet then in power seems to have been pledged not to intervene in case the South Germans voluntarily sought union with the North; and that, if peace could have been preserved for a few years longer, the French people would probably have made up their minds to accept the inevitable.

After the crisis provoked by the Hohenzollern Candidacy for the throne of Spain had arisen, an influential and noisy section of the French public and of the Parisian press adopted an attitude of reckless bellicosity and did their utmost to render war inevitable. As for the government, the charges so generally cur-

rent immediately after the downfall of the Second Empire that Napoleon III and his ministers had deliberately sought for war, are no longer seriously made even in Germany (save for rare exceptions). It is now commonly held that the Emperor, although vacillating and inclined at times to defer too much to the clamors of the war party, would, on the whole, very much have preferred to keep the peace. Much the same may be said of Émile Ollivier, the head of the cabinet, and of the Foreign Minister, the Duc de Gramont. Nevertheless, although the intentions of the French government of that time have been vindicated, the wisdom of their policy has not been. Except for Gramont and Ollivier themselves, in their not too convincing *apologiae*, nearly all French historians have denounced that policy with a vigor that should leave nothing to be desired east of the Rhine. Indeed, it can scarcely be denied that the French ministers, by premature threats of war, notably in their public declaration of July 6, by their unnecessary and imprudent demands on July 12, and in general by their too persistent efforts to achieve a complete and spectacular diplomatic victory, did much to bring on the conflict and to drag their country into "the most imprudent war that ever was."

Much more difficult, and still beset with controversy, is the question of the responsibilities of Germany. Here, after a brief period when Napoleon was made the scapegoat for everything, French historians began an offensive which has ever since been vigorously conducted and which received its strongest expression in Ollivier's dictum: "The real author of the war, he who willed it, sought it, premeditated it, prepared it, rendered it inevitable at the appointed moment, was Bismarck." [1]

Such attacks were for a long time greeted east of the Rhine only with contemptuous or angry denials, based on a deeply rooted conviction of Germany's complete innocence of any responsibility for the war. In the eyes of the German public the *Kriegsschuldfrage* for 1870 was as definitively settled against France as in the mind of the French public to-day the similar question about 1914 is settled against Germany. Hence, for

[1] Ollivier, *L'Empire libéral*, xiv, p. 542.

nearly a quarter of a century, German historians confidently took their stand upon the official version of the affair put forth by Bismarck at the time of the war. It was maintained that the policy of the Prussian government before the war had been thoroughly peaceful. The candidacy of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern for the Spanish throne was no "intrigue of Bismarck against France," but a matter which the German Chancellor had had nothing to do with, and of which he had known very little down to the time of the explosion at Paris. This candidacy had, indeed, been only a private affair of the Hohenzollerns, which did not in the least concern the Prussian government and about which King William had been consulted only as head of the family, not as head of the Prussian state. Similarly, no fault could be found with Bismarck for the fact that, when the King had firmly but courteously rejected an outrageous demand of the French ambassador at Ems, the Chancellor had communicated a telegram on that subject to the newspapers and had sent it around to "a few" of his envoys, purely "for their information." In short, Germany had neither sought, nor given any occasion for, war: the conflict was due solely to the dynastic necessities of Napoleon or to the jealousy, megalomania, and chauvinism of the French people.

Such comfortable theories were then rudely shattered by a series of disclosures that came during the eighteen-nineties. On the one hand, the publication of the diary of King Charles of Roumania [2] for the first time revealed something of the secret history of the Hohenzollern Candidacy, and proved that Bismarck had, indeed, been the chief promoter of that project so loaded with dynamite. On the other hand, the fallen Chancellor himself, by conversations, by communications to the press, and finally by his memoirs, revealed to a somewhat shocked nation how by his crafty reëditing of the 'Ems Telegram' and the well-calculated publicity he had given it, he had tried, at the supreme moment of the diplomatic crisis, to goad the French into war.[3]

[2] *Aus dem Leben König Karls von Rumänien*, 2 vols., 1894.

[3] Bismarck, who already in the '70s began to regale private audiences with the story of his manipulation of the telegram from Ems, indulged in such a series of

These disclosures, which confirmed a good part of what Heinrich von Sybel, the chief of Bismarck's historical general staff, had been wont to call the "lying fables" and "inventions" of the Duc de Gramont, compelled a rather nervous and even panicky retreat on the part of German historians from the positions once deemed so impregnable. And as nearly all the new material that has come to light since that time [4] has made their case worse (from a patriotic standpoint), this retreat has continued, and there is some reason to doubt whether it is finished even yet. At all events, one may say that in the past twenty-five years the views of French and German historians on this subject have come very much nearer together, and that on certain larger questions a substantial agreement has been reached.

It is now agreed that, from 1866 on, Bismarck, like most of those prominent in Prussian political and military circles, regarded a war with France as inevitable sooner or later, convinced as he was that France would not peaceably permit the union of South Germany with the North, which was at that time the great object of his policy. It is tolerably well agreed that he also regarded such a war as in itself desirable, believing that the South Germans were not likely to seek that union, at least for a long time to come, unless they were shaken out of their selfishness and apathy by a shock from outside, such as could best be furnished by a great common effort for a national cause, and by a great common victory over "that neighboring nation which was our age-long aggressor." [5] It is clear that he shared Moltke's profound conviction that Germany would enter such a war with every chance of success. It is agreed that, wherever the idea of the Hohenzollern Candidacy may have originated, Bismarck took up the project and worked with all his might and

public disclosures on the subject in 1892 that Count Caprivi, then Chancellor, felt obliged to lay before the Reichstag, on November 20, both Abeken's original despatch from Ems and Bismarck's revised version, in order to check the Socialist charges that Bismarck had provoked a war by publishing a "forged" document.

[4] Notably Hesselbarth's volume (1913), which contains at least a large part of the secret correspondence exchanged between Bismarck and the Spaniards at the time when the Hohenzollern Candidacy was being hatched.

[5] Cf. the well-known passage in Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii, pp. 88, 89.

main to put it through, as "a political necessity," [6] although to the day of his death he always tried to conceal or to minimize his share in the matter. Finally, scarcely anyone will now deny that at least in the last stage of the crisis of July, 1870, at the time when he reëdited the Ems Telegram, the Chancellor was working to provoke a war.

Was not that his aim throughout? If he regarded a war with France as inevitable, safe, and desirable, may we not assume that from the outset he deliberately planned to bring one about? In hatching in deep secrecy that plot for the Hohenzollern Candidacy, in a manner calculated to wound equally the interests and dignity of France, at a time when, as all the world knew, Franco-Prussian relations were like a powder-mine in which the least spark might produce an explosion, was he not scheming to provoke an explosion? Lothar Bucher, his chief agent in this affair, later declared that the candidacy was "a trap set for Napoleon," and that as such it had been brilliantly successful.[7] Moritz Busch, another confidant, relates how he one day protested to Bismarck against the latter's attempts to deny "the trap set for Napoleon, which he had also baited afresh by condensing the Ems despatch," and urged that by denying it, he was robbing himself of "the finest leaf from his wreath of laurels." Thereupon, Busch affirms, "these details recalled to him all the circumstances and he no longer denied anything. He brought the conversation to a close with the words: 'We will talk it over some other time,'" but no opportunity for such a later talk ever came.[8] The temptation is great, then, to suppose that in this case, as in those of both his earlier wars, Bismarck "had the intention of all the things he did." A great many French writers have affirmed it,[9] but very few German historians have yet been willing to accept this view in full.[10] Nearly all German writers and

[6] *Aus dem Leben König Karls*, ii, p. 75.

[7] Busch, *Tagebuchblätter*, iii, pp. 238, 239, and 330, 331.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Michelet, Gramont, Legrelle, Hansen, Édouard Simon, S. Denis, Hanotaux, Welschinger, Ollivier, etc.

[10] Perhaps the most notable German writer who has accepted this view is Constantin Rössler in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, lxxix, pp. 114–131 (1895). Lorenz adopts a somewhat similar position.

a fair number of French ones [11] still incline toward theories less damaging to Bismarck's moral reputation.

One need not, perhaps, devote much attention to the hypothesis rather popular in Germany twenty years ago, that it was a case of "two offensives meeting" — Napoleon laying a mine for Bismarck through his plans for a Franco-Austro-Italian coalition against Prussia, and Bismarck, learning of the plot, laying a counter-mine through the Hohenzollern Candidacy, and thus provoking the war before his enemies had completed their preparations to strike.[12] It can scarcely be affirmed that the very problematical danger from an alliance which never got beyond the stage of discussion, and which might well have had no more than a defensive character, could have been sufficient justification for Bismarck in immediately forcing on a war; and we have no evidence that he either knew much about, or was very much concerned about, the proposed alliance. This view, then, seems virtually to be abandoned to-day.

The theory still most commonly held in Germany, with manifold variations in detail, is that Bismarck could not possibly have anticipated the extraordinary course of later events or the seldom paralleled blunders which were to be committed by the French government, and that, in working for the Hohenzollern Candidacy, war was not the outcome that he foresaw or the aim that he had in view. That candidacy, if successful, promised very real advantages to Prussia: a great increase in the prestige of the dynasty, commercial benefits, and, above all, the raising up of a new enemy for Napoleon in the rear, just as, four years before, on the eve of his last war, Bismarck had raised up an enemy at Austria's back by planting Charles of Hohenzollern on the throne of Roumania. It meant winning a new ally for Prussia, who might render somewhat the same services in the future Franco-German war that Italy had rendered in 1866. Manifestly, Bismarck was trying to steal a march upon France, to gain an advantage over her. Obviously, she would take offense, in

[11] Sorel, La Gorce, Lehautcourt, Seignobos, Salomon, etc.

[12] This view was championed especially by Professor Delbrück and by W. Schultze.

greater or less degree, whenever the plot came to light. But could he, need he, have foreseen that war must be the inevitable result? That is, indeed, the crux of the whole problem. According to one group of writers,[13] Bismarck expected that Napoleon, sick, fundamentally peaceful, and unprepared for war, would give way once more as on so many previous occasions. Others [14] hold that the Chancellor must have reckoned very seriously with the possibility that the candidacy would lead to war, but that he deliberately took the risk of it, convinced that the game was worth the candle: if Napoleon submitted peaceably, Prussia would greatly have improved her international position; and if Napoleon did not submit, the inevitable war might as well come now, when the Emperor would presumably have to fight Prussia and Spain combined. From this latter theory it is no great jump to the view commonly held in France that Bismarck regarded war as the probable and the desirable outcome of the adventure. Still other German historians,[15] while admitting that the Chancellor was playing a dangerous game, refuse to express an opinion as ot how far he anticipated a warlike issue or what his ultimate aim was.

At all events, unless one accepts the view that a Franco-Prussian war was under any circumstances inevitable, it is difficult not to accuse both governments in 1870 of criminally playing with fire. Bismarck deliberately embarked on a project which, whatever its primary aim may have been, did involve placing Napoleon in a position where he might either have to fight or to accept another grave defeat that might involve the downfall of his tottering dynasty. And France then tried to turn the tables by forcing Prussia to confront the alternative of war or a humiliating backdown — and with a statesman like Bismarck the choice was quickly made.

[13] Egelhaaf, Hesselbarth, Marx.
[14] Rathlef, Lenz, Brandenburg.
[15] Erich Marcks, particularly.

CHAPTER II

THE HOHENZOLLERN CANDIDACY

THE origins of the Franco-German War, in the broader sense, go back at least to 1866. The previously rather amicable relations between the two countries had first been imperiled — and the French public thrown into consternation — by the events of that 'fatal summer' in Central Europe: the staggering defeat of Austria, the huge annexations made by victorious Prussia, the virtual incorporation of most of the surviving German states in the Hohenzollern monarchy through the founding of the North German Confederation — in short, the complete overthrow of that old order of things in Central Europe which had been so agreeable and safe from the French standpoint. With all due sympathy for the German unifying movement, it is not to be wondered at that the French people felt alarmed at a revolution so contrary to all the traditions of French policy, and at the menace to their security implied in the sudden appearance at their gates of an immensely aggrandized power, of vast military strength and with still unsatiated ambitions. If Viennese statesmen had once talked as if Sevastopol were an Austrian victory, French opinion now heaped coals of fire on their heads by insisting that Sadowa was a French defeat. It was widely said that Napoleon III ought never to have permitted this overturn; since he had done so, let him at least set a check upon any further encroachments of Prussia, across the Main into South Germany, for instance; and if a good opportunity occurred, many Frenchmen would doubtless have been glad to seek, arms in hand, their 'revenge for Sadowa.'

East of the Rhine public opinion was scarcely less excited. Resentment at this sudden ebullition of French 'jealousy' and animosity, indignation at the French veto on the union of South Germany with the North, and fears of Napoleon's supposed designs upon the Rhinelands combined with old memories of the

struggle against the first Napoleon and with the longing felt in some circles to 'liberate' Alsace-Lorraine to inflame still further that hatred of France which had long been, perhaps, the strongest sentiment of the German people in their foreign relations. As for Bismarck, even before the outbreak of the war of 1866 he seems to have anticipated that his work would not be complete until he had vanquished both France and Austria;[1] and on the morrow of Sadowa the mere offer of French mediation had led him to swear a "Hannibal's oath" to "have his revenge upon Louis."[2]

In spite of the wild talk in both countries about the coming 'inevitable' war, Napoleon III, faithful to his old sympathy for Prussia and even for the German national movement, at first hoped to avert a conflict by reaching a friendly bargain with Bismarck. If France could secure some sort of equivalent for the recent gains of Prussia, the French public might become reconciled to the new situation. To such 'compensations' the Emperor felt entitled, both because of his very real services to Prussia, and because of various half-promises that Bismarck had formerly made him. Unfortunately for France, however, Bismarck had no territory that he was free to give away (one cannot blame him, of course, for refusing to cede German lands); and in his hour of triumph, now that he no longer needed Napoleon, he was by no means so generous as formerly with other people's territory (Belgium). Three times Napoleon tried and failed to reach an agreement. After the third attempt, which quite unexpectedly brought the two countries to the verge of war (1867), after he had learned that his former friend would fight rather than allow him to gain even a 'bicoque' like Luxemburg, the Emperor had to convince himself that gratitude did not enter into Bismarck's

[1] What I have in mind here especially is his astonishing overture to Gablenz in May, 1866, that Austria and Prussia should patch up their quarrel, and, mobilized as they both were, fall upon unarmed France, take Alsace away from her, etc. See his confidences on the subject to Cohen, Nov. 9, 1880 (Brauer, Marcks, and others, *Erinnerungen an Bismarck*, p. 332); to Busch, Jan. 28, 1883 (Busch, *Tagebuchblätter*, iii, pp. 142, 143); to Friedjung, June 13, 1890 (Friedjung, *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft in Deutschland*, i, p. 303, and ii, p. 566).

[2] Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III). As to the "oath," cf. Mittnacht, *Erinnerungen an Bismarck*, i, p. 61, and Poschinger, *Neue Tischgespräche*, i, p. 86.

conception of politics. Henceforth there was no more talk of a friendly agreement to redress the balance and appease an excited public opinion. From the time of the Luxemburg crisis onward, the relations between France and Prussia were as cold and strained as possible, and all Europe lived in constant fear of the 'inevitable' conflict. It was a situation comparable only to that which existed just before 1756 or 1914.

Each side bestirred itself to find allies or to steal away the friends of its enemies. England, indeed, held rather aloof; but Russia, bound both by dynastic ties and by a sense of favors to come, clove firmly to the side of Prussia; while Austria and Italy inclined toward France, and fitfully negotiated for a triple alliance. Even the assistance of the minor powers was not to be disdained, and among them there was one which, if only by reason of its geographic position, now acquired a greatly enhanced importance — namely, Spain.

Spain, under Isabel II, had long passed as a friend and, in a sense, a client of France; and, in spite of the wayward temper and often exasperating actions of the Court of Madrid, this friendship was well worth cultivating. For in case of a war in Central Europe it was highly important for France not to be exposed to an attack from the rear, and to be able to throw the whole of her forces to the eastern front. Moreover, in such a crisis Napoleon might wish to withdraw his garrison from Rome and transfer the duty of protecting the Pope to other hands; and no other power was so willing to undertake the task as the ultra-Catholic government of Isabel II.[3] But if these facts made the Emperor constantly solicitous to preserve the friendship of Spain, they formed so many motives for Bismarck to seek to deprive France of that advantage.

The early history of Bismarck's Spanish policy is still shrouded in mystery. It is evident that he could count from the first upon the sympathies of a large section of the Spanish public, never

[3] During the crisis in the Roman question in Oct. 1867 — the crisis that ended at Mentana — the Spanish government offered to take over the garrisoning of the Papal State. (Telegram of Count Crivelli, the Austrian envoy at Madrid, of Oct. 21, 1867, *V.A.* xx, 22, *Espagne, Rapports*, 1867.) This idea had been vented at least a year earlier (Crivelli's report of May 25, 1866. *Ibid., Rapports*, 1866).

really cordial toward France,[4] and particularly of the parties opposed to the Queen's government. As that government seemed definitely committed to France, it must have been altogether agreeable to him that the revolutionary parties were planning the expulsion of the house of Bourbon and the establishment of a new dynasty in Spain. And there is much reason to think that long before the serious appearance of the Hohenzollern Candidacy there was another candidacy for the Spanish throne that was favorably viewed at Berlin, because it would be so unwelcome to Napoleon: that of the Duc de Montpensier, the son of King Louis Philippe. Into the tales that circulated just before and after the Spanish Revolution regarding Bismarck's dealings with Montpensier's friends,[5] it is impossible to enter here; but it is of interest to note the opinion of an Austrian diplomat at Madrid, that it was only after he had convinced himself of the hopelessness of Montpensier's cause that the North German Chancellor took up the Hohenzollern project.[6]

In September, 1868, the long-expected revolution broke out in Spain, and very quickly triumphed. The new provisional government, headed by Serrano and Prim,[7] then set out to canvass Europe for a king to take the place of the fallen Bourbons. Their first choice, undoubtedly, would have been the ex-king

[4] The Austrian envoy at Madrid affirmed that, as between France and Prussia, Spanish opinion was well summed up in a newspaper article, supposed, indeed, to have been inspired by a cabinet minister, which declared that "in case of a general conflagration Spain would find herself on the side of Prussia against France." (Crivelli's report of Oct. 13, 1867. *V.A., loc. cit.*)

In another report he wrote: "Le sentiment qui poussait autrefois l'Espagne vers l'Autriche, *comme l'adversaire naturel de la France, napoléonienne surtout,* la pousse maintenant vers la Prusse. L'Envoyé d'Espagne à Berlin (ancien secrétaire particulier de la Reine) doit avoir fait quelques démarches dans ce sens l'été dernier. . . . On sait très bien ici le rôle important que pourrait jouer l'Espagne si la France était engagée dans une guerre." (Report of Oct. 12, 1867, *loc. cit.*)

[5] Austrian reports from Madrid of Aug. 8 (Jaeger), Oct. 5, 6, Nov. 26, 1868 (Baron Lago), *V.A., loc. cit., Rapports,* 1868; from Brussels, July 27, 1868 (Count Vitzthum), *V.A.,* xxii, 26. *Belgique, Rapports,* 1868. Pirala, *Historia contemporánea,* iii, p. 192. Ollivier, *op. cit.,* xi, pp. 69, 70.

[6] Report of Count Dubsky, Sept. 15, 1869. *V.A., loc. cit., Rapports,* 1869.

[7] In June, 1869, Serrano received the title of Regent, and Prim, who was throughout the leading spirit in the government, became President of the Council of Ministers.

Ferdinand of Portugal [8] or his son, King Louis, as such an election would have furthered the prospects of that 'Iberian union' which had long been the dream of Spanish patriots. Unfortunately, neither the Portuguese nor two Italian princes who were approached were willing to accept so precarious a throne. It was, therefore, largely for lack of any better alternative, and as a last resort, that the Spanish government took up the candidacy of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, which was to have such disastrous consequences.

Leopold,[9] a son of Prince Karl Anton of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, was the brother of Charles, who in 1866 had been called to the throne of Roumania, and — it may be noted — the father of the present King Ferdinand of Roumania. The Sigmaringen princes belonged to that elder, Catholic branch of the House of Hohenzollern which had remained in the original family home in southwestern Germany at the time when a younger branch had gone off to the north to attain such dazzling fortunes as kings of Prussia. In recent times the relations between the two branches, though distant enough from a genealogical standpoint, had become very constant and intimate. The Sigmaringen princes had been admitted to the prerogatives of younger sons of the royal house, and Karl Anton bore the title of Royal Highness. The latter had also been prime minister of Prussia (1858–62), and had since been serving as military governor of the Rhineland and Westphalia. Leopold was an officer in the Prussian army. To all intents and purposes, they were Prussian princes, and to-day it would no longer be maintained that one of them could have accepted a foreign crown without the consent of King William as head of the family.[10]

[8] Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg, husband of Donha Maria II, with the title of King Consort, and regent at the beginning of the reigns of their two sons, Pedro V (1853–61) and Luiz (Louis) I (1861–89).

[9] Born 1835, died 1905.

[10] While German historians used to deny this (see, for instance, Sybel, *Begründung des Deutschen Reiches*, vi, pp. 254, 255), their thesis has been refuted by no one more strongly than by the Sigmaringen princes themselves. When the Roumanian crown was offered to Prince Charles in 1866, his father wrote to the King: " . . . habe ich selbstverständlich . . . nur erwidern können, dass eine bejahende oder ablehnende Antwort mir aus dem Grunde nicht zustehe, weil Eure Majestät als

It is true that they were also related by marriage to the Bonapartes,[11] for which reason Napoleon had long stood on very friendly terms with them. The Emperor had favored the accession of Prince Charles to the Roumanian throne, and had once proposed Prince Leopold for the crown of Greece.[12] But if Bismarck later was fond of declaring that 'he had never doubted that a Hohenzollern so closely related to the French Emperor could count on the support of France and Napoleon III in his candidacy for the Spanish throne,'[13] such statements, to say the least, showed a singular lack of candor. For no one knew better than he how thoroughly Sadowa and its aftermath had changed Napoleon's point of view as to the advantages of filling vacant European thrones with Prussian princes. The Hohenzollerns themselves, who boasted that their sympathies were altogether Prussian and not in the least French,[14] were perfectly well aware from the outset that France would have very grave objections to their candidacy in Spain.[15] And so, one may venture to say,

Allerhöchster Haus- und Familien- Chef allein und ausschliesslich hierüber Entschliessung zu nehmen und Verfügung zu treffen haben." (Karl Anton to King William, April 4, 1866. *Aus dem Leben König Karls*, i, p. 5.)

Cf. also, Karl Anton to the King, Feb. 25, 1870 (Zingeler, *Karl Anton Fürst von Hohenzollern*, pp. 235–237), and June 19, 1870 (Zingeler, in the *Deutsche Revue*, xxxvii[1] [1912], p. 66).

[11] Leopold's grandmother, on his father's side, was a Murat, and, on his mother's side, Stéphanie Beauharnais.

[12] This fact (hitherto unknown, I think) appears from a report of Gorchakov to the Emperor Alexander II (Feb. 6–18, 1863), which I once came across in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Petrograd:

"Le Duc de Montebello [the French ambassador] vient de recevoir un télégramme par lequel on lui demande si nous serions disposés à appuyer à Athènes, avec l'Angleterre et la France, la candidature du Pce. de Hohenzollern-Siegmaringen, marié à Donna Antonia, Infante de Portugal." (1863, *Doklady*.)

[13] To Baron von Stumm, 1895 (Brauer, Marcks, and others, *Erinnerungen an Bismarck*, pp. 78, 79); similarly to Loftus, July 20, 1870 (Loftus, *Reminiscences*, 2d series, i, p. 283); to Henri des Houx, Nov., 1892 (Poschinger, *Interviews*, i, p. 396); *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii, pp. 78 and elsewhere.

[14] Cf. Karl Anton to the Crown Prince of Prussia, July 11, 1870: "Nichts ist schwieriger, als contre cœur dem Feinde gegenüber freundlich zu sein, zumal wenn man sich nur als Preusse und mit keinem Atom als Franzose fühlt." (Zingeler, *Karl Anton Fürst von Hohenzollern*, p. 255.)

[15] Karl Anton to Charles of Roumania, Dec. 9, 1868: "Ausserdem würde Frankreich wegen unsrer Beziehungen zu Preussen niemals die Festsetzung der

was everyone else who was at all informed as to the international situation, although there might be room for doubt as to how far France would go in her opposition.

The origin and development of the Hohenzollern Candidacy were long one of the great mysteries of nineteenth-century history, and if in the last thirty years much light has been shed on the subject, many parts of it still remain decidedly obscure.[16] Apparently the first suggestion of the candidacy is to be traced back to a dinner party, held at Biarritz in November, 1866, at the house of Mrs. O'Shea, and attended by a group of Spanish revolutionists and Baron von Werthern, the Prussian envoy to Madrid. This strangely assorted company had fallen to discussing whom they would put on the throne of Spain after the expected overthrow of Queen Isabel, and the German diplomat threw out the idea that the only suitable candidate was Leopold of Hohenzollern. Shortly afterwards Werthern hastened to lay the same idea before Bismarck, King William, and Karl Anton.[17]

Two years later, immediately after the revolution, Prince

Hohenzollern jenseits der Pyrenäen gestatten können. Es ist ja schon von Eifersucht angeschwollen, dass ein Mitglied der Hohenzollern die untere Donau beherrscht." (*Aus dem Leben König Karls*, i, p. 311.)

[16] How much material has accumulated on the subject but also how many enigmas concerning it remain to be solved, may best be seen in the very useful work published by Professor Richard Fester in 1913, entitled *Briefe, Aktenstücke und Regesten zur Geschichte der Hohenzollernschen Thronkandidatur in Spanien*, in which he endeavored to bring together all the sources that were then available. No really adequate history of the candidacy can be written until we are in possession of the documents concerning it that are preserved in the archives of the Berlin Foreign Office, the papers of the Sigmaringen family archives (of which Zingeler has published only a portion, and these with all too many omissions and excisions), and whatever records may be extant in Spain. Very little is to be found in the public archives of Madrid, but this is not surprising, since the candidacy was handled by Prim by extra-official channels, and as far as anything was done in writing, by confidential private letters and telegrams, which have not been left in the state archives. It seems very possible, however, that documents of much value may yet be found in Spain in the archives of private families.

[17] His reports of that time were not accessible to me, but the hitherto unknown fact that he broached the project at that early date to the King and Bismarck appears from his later report to the Chancellor (July 25, 1870), which is printed below in Appendix II. More details as to the dinner party at Biarritz are published by Fester, from Werthern's private papers, in the *Historische Vierteljahrschrift*, xv (1912), pp. 227, 228.

Leopold's name began to be discussed in Spanish and foreign newspapers as that of a possible candidate for the throne. There was one fact which clearly commended him to Spanish sympathies: namely, that he was married to Donha Antonia, a daughter of the ex-king of Portugal. If Ferdinand and Louis both rejected the crown, the election of Leopold might well seem the next best choice to the supporters of the Iberian union, for the succession in Portugal, too, might some day fall to Donha Antonia or her children. Apart from the difficulty of finding a receptive candidate anywhere else, this Pan-Iberian speculation was the chief factor in drawing a certain number of adherents to Leopold's cause. Among them none was to show himself so ardent and indefatigable as a certain deputy in the Cortes, Don Eusebio de Salazar y Mazarredo, whose zeal has, indeed, been ascribed to Bismarck's gold, but might better be traced back to his Iberian enthusiasms or to Werthern's eloquence that night at Biarritz.[18]

At what stage in the affair Bismarck's hand may first be discerned is a matter of controversy. Already in December, 1868, the visit to Madrid of the Prince of Putbus, accompanied by Colonel Strantz of the Prussian General Staff, seemed to indicate the Chancellor's interest in the Spanish situation. In the following May, Theodor von Bernhardi, already used in Italy for diplomatic work of a somewhat ambiguous character, arrived in Spain, vested by Bismarck with some sort of secret mission, which kept him there till the outbreak of the war, and the true character of which has never been revealed. Next, we have an enigmatic notice, preserved by a sometimes very well-informed Spanish historian of half a century ago, which runs: "July 14, 1869. A banker of Berlin addressed a long letter to General Serrano, telling him that there was no candidate more suitable

[18] Ollivier does not hesitate to call Salazar Bismarck's paid agent (*op. cit.*, xi, pp. 582, 583), but without advancing the shadow of a proof. Some rather startling statements as to Bismarck's large expenditures of money in working up the Hohenzollern Candidacy in Spain are made in an unsigned article in the *Quarterly Review* (Oct. 1898), clxxxviii, pp. 532, 533, and in the article by Sir Rowland Blennerhassett in the *National Review* (Oct. 1902), xl, p. 225, but neither writer produces his evidence. Fester assumes that some Prussian money was spent in subventioning Spanish newspapers. It is likely that the facts in the matter will never be fully known.

than the Prince of Hohenzollern. As a result of this, people in Spain began to consider him." [19] Most recent writers have been tempted to see in this Bismarck's first effort to press the claims of his candidate, by roundabout channels, upon the attention of the Spanish government. Doubts have, indeed, been raised as to the credibility of this isolated statement; but it would seem to be confirmed by the fact, which I can here adduce for the first time, that a few weeks after the date in question the Austrian envoy, visiting Serrano at La Granja, heard the latter several times mention the Hohenzollern Candidacy, "not as a probability but as a possibility," while Silvela, the Foreign Minister, told him directly that "overtures had been made from Berlin in favor of the Prince of Hohenzollern." The Austrian diplomat was led to infer that the Prussian government was behind these overtures, but had acted outside the official channels.[20]

It was probably in some degree as a result of these advances that in September, 1869, the zealous Salazar first obtained Prim's consent to go to Germany and sound the Hohenzollern princes on the subject. The mission proved unsuccessful. Although escorted to the castle of the Weinburg by his old friend Werthern,[21] now Prussian envoy at Munich, to whom he had applied for an

[19] Pirala, *Historia contemporánea*, iii, p. 392.

[20] Report of Count Karnicki, No. 52B (Réservé), Aug. 13, 1869, *V.A.*, *loc. cit.*, *Rapports*, 1869.

[21] Werthern's services to Salazar on this occasion have sometimes been taken as the first clear proof of Bismarck's interest in the Hohenzollern Candidacy. We do not know that the Prussian envoy acted with the Chancellor's knowledge and approval, but it has frequently been said that he would not have dared take such a step without Bismarck's sanction, in view of the rigid discipline which the latter imposed upon his subordinates. Sybel, on the other hand, says categorically that Bismarck learned of Werthern's action only at the end of July, 1870 (*op. cit.*, vi, p. 319, note). This statement is obviously based on Werthern's report of July 25, which Sybel must have seen in the archives and which I have printed in Appendix II. It does not seem to me that this conclusion can be drawn with certainty from this document. Werthern's retrospective account of July 25 may have been written chiefly for the purpose of furnishing Bismarck with collected materials for one of the numerous *démentis* that he was then hurling against the Duc de Gramont. Moreover, since in this report he recalls at least one thing which Bismarck already knew (namely, that he had urged the candidacy upon the Chancellor already at the close of 1866), why are we to assume that the trip to the Weinburg had never before been reported?

introduction to the Sigmaringen princes, Salazar proved unable to overcome Leopold's and Karl Anton's fears, based both on the unsettled conditions in Spain and on the opposition to be expected from France.

After that the matter rested several months while Prim was again negotiating with an Italian prince. But when his offers had once more been rejected, he fell back upon the Hohenzollern Candidacy — in despair, perhaps, of anything better; and in February, 1870, Salazar again took the road to Germany, equipped this time with letters from Prim not only to Leopold, but also to the King and Bismarck. Only the first of these letters is textually known to us, but in it one can already discover the outlines of the whole plan of campaign later followed. Recognizing the dangerous opposition to be expected if the negotiations were publicly known, Prim begged for "the most extreme secrecy." Moreover, with a view to the objections to be anticipated from France in case it should ever appear that the matter had been officially negotiated between the Spanish and Prussian governments, he suggested what then became the stereotyped fiction, that the Spanish and Prussian ministers of foreign affairs should not be supposed to have anything to do with the Prince's decision, nor (by implication) should King William, since Leopold was of full legal age and master of his own actions. This programme was in striking contrast to the policy, so open and honest as far as the interested foreign powers were concerned, which Prim had hitherto followed with other candidacies. It degraded the affair to the level of what can only be called an intrigue or a plot. That Prim should have felt it necessary to resort to such tactics is sufficient evidence that he clearly recognized from the first how contrary the project was to the wishes and interests of France.[22]

From this point on, our sources flow more freely, and it is possible to follow the development of the plan in much greater de-

[22] Prim's letter to Leopold of Feb. 17, 1870, is printed below as No. 256. The credit for mapping out a programme that would give France no basis for attacking the Prussian government in the matter has usually been ascribed to Bismarck, but must now, apparently, be transferred in large part to Prim, unless one is to surmise (as one is tempted to do) that Bismarck had in some way already suggested at Madrid this plan, which so exactly conformed to his wishes.

tail than can be attempted here. Salazar arrived in Berlin on February 26, and remained there for a week in intermittent conference with Bismarck. Karl Anton and Leopold were also at the capital as the King's guests. It is clear that Bismarck, whatever he may previously have done in the matter, now threw himself into the affair with all his energy. In the face of the strong opposition of the King and the candidate, he constantly pleaded "with great warmth" for acceptance, "for dynastic and political reasons," and because it would be "politically invaluable to have a friendly country in the rear of France." [23] We have the text of his long memorandum of February 27 — the first authentic expression of his views on the subject that is known to us.[24] Here, amid a mass of captious arguments designed only *in usum Regis*, there is one passage that probably reflects, in part at least, Bismarck's real motives: that in which it is argued that the advantage to Prussia of having a Hohenzollern king in Spain could be assessed at one to two army corps in case of a war between France and Germany. That he seriously thought, as is here affirmed, that the candidacy would serve the cause of peace [25] and would even be "of essential value" to France,[26] may be believed by those historians who like to portray Bismarck as a model of trustful innocence and, as someone has said, to turn a royal tiger into a harmless house-cat.

On March 15 there took place in the palace at Berlin that famous gathering which was neither the 'family council' of which German historians used to speak, nor yet a session of the council of ministers, as some French writers have asserted. It was, formally considered, only a dinner party, to which the King had invited, not only the Crown Prince and the Sigmaringen princes, but also the leading Prussian ministers, Bismarck, Thile, Schleinitz, and Delbrück, and — what was strangest, at a gathering where, as has often been said, the possibility of war with

[23] *Aus dem Leben König Karls*, ii, pp. 68, 70, 72.

[24] Printed in Keudell, *Fürst und Fürstin Bismarck*, pp. 430–433.

[25] On the ground that with a Prussian king at Madrid Napoleon would be much less willing to risk a war with Germany.

[26] By eliminating the danger of a republican or an Orleanist solution of the Spanish question.

France was not even considered [27] — the two chief Prussian military authorities, Moltke and Roon. Here the question of the candidacy was threshed out at length, and all the ministers present joined emphatically and unconditionally in recommending acceptance as "a patriotic duty toward Prussia." [28] Precisely what were the arguments advanced we do not know, though soon afterwards we find Karl Anton writing that the state of the German national question made acceptance imperative, and that while there might be a thousand reasons against accepting and only ten reasons for it, some of the ten were so important as to outweigh all personal and family considerations.[29] At all events, the King, who remained instinctively averse to the whole project, insisted on leaving the matter solely to Leopold's decision; and Leopold some days later decided to decline. Once more the candidacy seemed to be wrecked.

Bismarck, however, was not to be defeated. If Leopold had refused to serve, the task might be thrown upon his youngest brother, Frederick. The latter was hurriedly called home from abroad, and, after the necessary communications with Prim, urged to accept "as a political necessity."[30] In order to secure more adequate information as to political and military conditions in Spain and thus quiet the King's fears, two more secret agents were sent to Madrid — Lothar Bucher and Major von Versen.

[27] Sybel, *op. cit.*, vi, p. 321. Delbrück relates the statement, made to him by one of those present at this gathering, that the question of relations with France was not even mentioned at the conference that preceded the dinner, but that during the meal Moltke's neighbor at table asked him, "If Napoleon should take it badly, are we ready?"—to which Moltke replied with a cheerful affirmative (*Erinnerungen, Aufsätze und Reden*, p. 338). While this statement has been generally accepted and is constantly quoted, the first part of it seems to me decidedly questionable. We now know that the conference took place *after* the dinner, not before it (Gustav v. Diest, *Aus dem Leben eines Glücklichen*, pp. 546, 547), and it is almost inconceivable that on such an occasion and after the minister of war and the chief of the General Staff had been invited in, the question of possible trouble with France should not have been discussed.

[28] Karl Anton's letters to his wife, March 17 (*Deutsche Revue*, 39iii, p. 112), and to Charles of Roumania, March 20 (*Aus dem Leben König Karls*, ii, p. 72).

[29] Karl Anton's letters to his wife of March 17 and 18 (*Deutsche Revue*, 39iii, pp. 112 ff.).

[30] *Aus dem Leben König Karls*, ii, pp. 75, 76.

A lively exchange of telegrams, many of them couched for the sake of secrecy in an elaborate cabalistic jargon, was kept up with Prim and Salazar.[31] But Frederick, also, after long delays decided at the end of April not to risk the adventure. Meanwhile Bismarck, stricken with a lingering illness, had retired to Varzin (April 14) and seemed to be in no position to save a falling cause.

But deliverance now came from an unexpected quarter. Leopold himself began to have scruples of conscience over his refusal. This revulsion of feeling was strengthened by the pleadings of Versen, just returned from Spain and full of enthusiasm for the candidacy. Finally, with much additional stimulus from Bismarck and the Crown Prince, Leopold intimated at the beginning of June that he would now accept if the throne were again offered to him. Bismarck hastened to invite Prim to renew his overtures, and sent Bucher a second time to Spain to arrange the details. The upshot was that the much-travelled Salazar once more returned to Germany. This time his mission was crowned with complete success. On June 19 Leopold requested the King to authorize his acceptance; two days later, "with a heavy heart," King William assented; on the 23d the Prince wrote the necessary letter to Prim,[32] and Salazar started homeward in triumph.

Hitherto the secret of the negotiations had been jealously guarded, and for good reason. Napoleon was to be caught by surprise. According to the programme which seems to have been agreed upon between Prim and Bismarck, presumably through

[31] The extensive but incomplete collection of telegrams exchanged between Bismarck, Thile, Prim, and Salazar (March–July, 1870), which came from a Spanish source into the hands of the German historian Hesselbarth, and was published by him in 1913 (in his book *Drei psychologische Fragen zur spanischen Thronkandidatur Leopolds von Hohenzollern*), forms one of the most curious and valuable contributions that have yet been made to our knowledge of this affair. As examples of the cryptic language employed, one finds the dinner party of March 15 referred to as the meeting of "the bankers interested" to "discuss the loan"; later the Hohenzollern princes are referred to as "pipe No. 4" (Leopold) and "pipe No. 6" (Frederick); Salazar is "the engineer," etc.

[32] All the documents bearing upon the development of the affair from March to June, which has been only hastily sketched in the text since the story is well known, may be conveniently studied in Fester's above-cited work, *Briefe, Aktenstücke und Regesten*, etc.

the medium of Bucher, the next step would have been for the Spanish government to reveal to the Cortes the name of its candidate, and at once to rush through his election in the eight days which were the shortest period within which such a transaction could be effected according to the existing law. The Emperor would thus be confronted with a *fait accompli*. He might rage as much as he pleased, but he would scarcely have time to prevent the election. As to what would happen afterwards, the two confederates were probably not agreed. Prim seems to have hoped to mollify Napoleon by a visit to him at Paris or Vichy immediately after the election.[33] Bismarck, on the other hand, looked forward to putting up a bold front and facing the enemy without flinching.

We have one extremely interesting document from his pen, of about the middle of June, which throws so much light both upon the attitude which he was to adopt in the sequel, and upon the line that he wished the Spaniards to take, that it deserves to be quoted at some length. It should be observed, however, that being, in all probability, addressed to Bucher to be communicated to Prim, this letter reflects, not so much Bismarck's own innermost thoughts, as what he desired the Spaniards to believe and expect. He writes (in part):

> It is possible that we may see a passing fermentation in France, and, without doubt, it is necessary to avoid anything that might provoke or increase it. Under these circumstances, would it be advisable to introduce my name in a public account of these negotiations? I think not, and, on the contrary, my personality ought to be completely left out of everything. In truth, I am not officially involved, *engagé*. It is a case of an act of will, on the one hand, of the Spanish nation, and, on the other hand, of a prince who is of full legal age, master of his own actions, a private citizen. Whether or not he has had reason to seek the consent of his father and of the head of the family, is a question of a private nature, not an affair of state. To lay such

[33] Since Prim already, about June 12, had informed Mercier, the French ambassador, of his impending trip to Vichy in July and of his desire to talk with the Emperor, it has sometimes been supposed that he intended to consult Napoleon about the Hohenzollern Candidacy before risking the election. But I think no one can study the telegrams sent from Madrid to Berlin in June, with their constant appeals for haste ("partie remise partie perdue") and an immediate election, without reaching the conclusion that the Emperor was to be consulted after the Rubicon was passed, and not before.

projects before the King is the duty of the minister of the royal household. I, on the other hand, have aided him with my advice, not in my quality of president of the council of ministers nor in that of minister of foreign affairs, but as a man in his confidence, like the other servants of the state who are in the secret. I believe that the Spanish government will do well to publish only General Prim's letter of February 17 [to Prince Leopold] and the latter's reply. Thus we shall have an unassailable position before the European public. If there is an outburst in France, we shall simply ask: What do you want? Do you wish to dictate the decisions of the Spanish nation and of a German private citizen? Then will come the opportunity to make use of what you, Doctor, propose to me. Undoubtedly they will cry "intrigue," they will be furious against me, but without finding any point of attack.[34]

The position was surely chosen with great skill. The share of the Prussian government in the affair was so carefully concealed that, if the French chose to pick a quarrel with Berlin over the matter, they would risk putting themselves in the wrong in the eyes of Germany and of Europe. If, on the other hand, they directed their attack toward Madrid (particularly after the election had taken place), the proverbial Spanish pride would

[34] This much-discussed document likewise comes from Pirala, *op. cit.*, iii, pp. 392, 393. Its authenticity has been almost universally admitted, both because the letter fits into the situation so perfectly and because the Spanish historian specifically declared that he wrote with the text before his eyes. Unhappily, he neglected to state to whom the letter was addressed. The names of Bernhardi and Salazar have been suggested, but I think the most probable conjecture is Bucher (because of the reference to "Doctor," the name by which Bucher was frequently referred to in the cryptic telegrams exchanged between Berlin and Madrid). Assuming that the letter was sent to Bucher, its date may be fixed from internal evidence as about June 12 (the time of Bucher's second Spanish trip, and when, as is elsewhere intimated in the letter, the difficulties from the side of the Hohenzollerns had been removed). While Pirala gives the text only in Spanish, the document was probably written originally in French, as appears from the fact that after the Spanish word *comprometido*, the word *engagé* has been left in the text in order to make the meaning clear, and also the fact that we encounter the expression "Mr. Gama," when the translator has obviously forgotten to replace *Monsieur* by *Señor*. Moreover, the awkward and often obscure character of the Spanish text argues strongly for the thesis that it is a translation. But Bismarck would not have written to Bucher in French unless his letter were intended to be shown to the Spaniards. Hence the document cannot be considered a strictly confidential one, an undiluted expression of the Chancellor's inmost thoughts. Hence the argument of those German historians who have thought to find here "decisive proof" that Bismarck anticipated nothing more than "a passing fermentation" in France, falls to the ground.

flare up and Napoleon would withdraw baffled — or else, if he chose to fight, he might have to deal with Spain and Prussia combined. Such was probably Bismarck's calculation. Hence he could contentedly retire once more to seclusion at Varzin.[35] His time for entering the arena would not arrive until after the Spanish banderillero had first gone forth to goad the Gallic bull.

At this point, however, two grave hitches occurred in the plan. In the first place, as a result, it seems, of a garbled or badly deciphered telegram sent by Salazar before his return from Germany, Prim had concluded that the negotiation with the Hohenzollerns would still require so much time that a wearied and impatient parliament could no longer be kept together in sweltering Madrid. Hence on June 23 he prorogued the Cortes until November.[36] The consummation of the plan would thus, it seemed, be postponed for four months. Secondly, Salazar, on arriving in Madrid, the 26th, was too exultant over his triumph to resist telling his friends about it. Within a few days the long-guarded secret was circulating widely around the capital. Prim, who after the prorogation of the Cortes had gone hunting in the country, hurried back too late to avert a disclosure that threatened his plans with ruin. Hence, on the night of July 2, he had to make an embarrassed confession about the candidacy to the angry French ambassador.[37]

[35] Where he went on June 8.

[36] It had been agreed before Salazar went to Germany that, if he could get back to Madrid with Leopold's acceptance before July 1, the Cortes were to be held together until the election could be pushed through, but that if his return were delayed beyond that date, the election should be deferred to the autumn. From Sigmaringen Salazar had telegraphed that he would arrive in Madrid on "the 26th" [of June], but through some mistake, which has never been cleared up, the date was read at Madrid as "the 9th" [of July]. Hence the prorogation of the Cortes.

It was for a long time customary to seek other explanations of this affair — as, for instance, that Prim was now alarmed as to the attitude of France and was anxious to postpone the election until he had personally tried to win over Napoleon; but since the publication by Hesselbarth and Zingeler of so many documents bearing on the matter, the older explanation as given in the text seems to be confirmed.

[37] If Baron Mercier's long report of that conversation remains within the bounds of very moderate language (printed in Gramont, *La France et la Prusse avant la*

On Sunday, the 3d of July, the great news reached Paris.[38]

guerre, pp. 360–365 and elsewhere), his Austrian colleague attests that his irritation knew no bounds, and "sa colère à l'égard du Président du Conseil se traduit même en imprécations très regrettables." (Count Dubsky's report, No. 31A of July 7, 1870: *V.A.*, *loc. cit.*, *Rapports*, 1870.)

[38] To be quite exact, a rumor on the subject, arising from indiscretions committed, not at Madrid, but by members of the Hohenzollern family, reached Paris on the afternoon of July 2 and was reproduced in one of the evening papers, the *Gazette de France* (see Fester, *BA.*, No. 250).

CHAPTER III

THE CRISIS. FIRST PHASE. JULY 3–8, 1870

THE news that the Spanish crown had been offered to a Prussian prince and had been accepted by him burst upon Paris like a bomb, and the sensation that it produced was quite indescribable. At court, in the cabinet, in the newspapers, there was but one opinion. The candidacy was a menace to the security of France, and the secrecy with which it had been enveloped was an insult. The whole plan was an intrigue of Bismarck against France, and must be thwarted at all costs.[1]

In looking back upon the affair to-day, it seems only fair to admit that all these conclusions were well founded. It has, indeed, often been said that a Hohenzollern king in Spain could have done France no great harm, for he would have had to forget his origins and pursue a policy based on Spanish, not on German, interests. But we have only too many examples to prove the fallacy of such assumptions: the cases, for instance, of King Constantine of Greece, King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, or of Leopold's own brother, Charles, who was able to make, and for thirty years to keep, Roumania a member of the Triple Alliance, and who, it is said, died broken-hearted because he could not bring her into the World War on the German side.[2] When Bismarck attached so much importance to the candidacy as to declare it "a political necessity" and "politically invaluable" to Prussia, surely the French cannot be accused of becoming alarmed over shadows. And if their phrases of that time about 'the restoration of the empire of Charles V' have often been denounced as a gross exaggeration of the danger, it should be remarked that such phrases were first used by Bismarck and the Hohenzollern

[1] Ollivier, *op. cit.*, xiv, pp. 20–53, gives a very interesting collection of the reactions upon this news of statesmen, diplomats, and newspapers in France and abroad.

[2] Gooch, *History of Modern Europe*, p. 603.

princes themselves to describe the "world-historic" significance of the project.[3]

Similarly, the fact that the negotiations over the candidacy had been conducted with all the methods of a conspiracy, so that France would have been faced with a *fait accompli* if the secret had not leaked out by accident, was in itself a serious affront. Such a procedure was surely contrary to the established usage in such cases, in accordance with which the interested foreign powers were entitled to know in advance of what was being planned and to have an opportunity to express their objections.[4]

In at once pointing to Bismarck as the chief author of the project, the French were far more deeply justified than they then had any means of knowing. But it is not quite fair to say that their charges were founded on nothing but suspicion. A great deal of evidence had already come into the possession of the French government as to Bismarck's machinations in Spain; and if they had hitherto disregarded it, in the overconfident belief that neither Spain nor Prussia could seriously contemplate so obnoxious a project, now that evidence must have acquired a new and convincing force.[5] But while they had information sufficient to raise a presumption that Bismarck was at the bottom of the affair, they had not enough evidence to furnish adequate proof.

It was, also, quite legitimate and according to precedent that, in setting out to check the Hohenzollern Candidacy, the French government should address its remonstrances, not only to Spain, but to Prussia. If only these remonstrances had been couched in proper form! But here, from the first, a conflict of motives ap-

[3] See Karl Anton's letter to Bismarck of Feb. 25, 1870 (Zingeler, pp. 238, 239), and Bismarck's memorandum of Feb. 27 (Keudell, pp. 431, 432).

[4] I think that on this point the lengthy argument of Ollivier, *op. cit.*, xiv, chap. 2, is substantially correct. The chief precedents were the cases of Belgium (1831), Greece (1862–63), and Spain herself (the marriage projects of 1845–46).

[5] Austrian diplomats, in particular, had frequently tried to enlighten the French government as to what Bismarck and his agents were doing in Spain, though their efforts had been met with exasperating skepticism. Beust to Hoyos at Paris, Aug. 24 and Oct. 7, 1869; Hoyos to Beust, Aug. 31 and Oct. 14, 1869; Karnicki's report from Madrid, May 20, 1870; Dubsky's reports from Madrid, June 24 and July 3, 1870: *V.A.*, ix, 90, *France, Expéditions* and *Rapports*, 1869, and xx, 22. *Espagne, Rapports*, 1870.

peared, which was to have disastrous consequences in the sequel: the conflict between the desire to avert a danger and the wish to obtain satisfaction for an affront. It was one thing to ask Prussia to use her good offices to terminate the candidacy. It was quite another thing to ask her to admit that she had been in any sense responsible for so objectionable a project. Moreover, in the existing state of relations and with such an antagonist as Bismarck, it was dangerous to adopt an angry or comminatory tone in any communications to Prussia. Nevertheless, as will be seen, the French government began by falling into both these errors.

On the eve of the onslaught from Paris, Germany presented the appearance of complete and unsuspecting tranquillity. The political and diplomatic world had dispersed for the summer vacation. The King of Prussia was taking his usual cure at Ems, with only one very subordinate representative of the Foreign Office at his side, Geheimrat Abeken. Bismarck was in furthermost Pomerania, at his country-seat of Varzin, accompanied only by the faithful Bucher. The Foreign Office had been left in charge of the Secretary of State, von Thile, a lieutenant whose distinguished manner and wealth of erudition had never been able to obliterate the fact that he possessed little of Bismarck's confidence and that his chief diplomatic rôle was to say, "I don't know." The foreign legations were half deserted. Benedetti, the French ambassador, had just departed for his vacation at Wildbad.[6] Karl Anton was at Sigmaringen, Leopold at or near Reichenhall in the Austrian Alps.[7]

In spite of all appearances that no major events were anticipated, it is probable that the Prussian authorities were not now taken so much by surprise as has often been conjectured. It is known that on June 29 Salazar had telegraphed to Bismarck both about the prorogation of the Cortes and about the danger that the secret of the candidacy could no longer be kept. He had added that just for this reason, as soon as Prim returned,

[6] July 1.

[7] Leopold's movements at this time have always remained something of a mystery. See Fester, *ED*, pp. 231, 232.

the council of ministers would meet (to take official cognizance of Leopold's acceptance) and that the Cortes would be called together in special session within a few days, to hold the election.[8] From this Bismarck could conclude that the crisis was right at hand — the decision in Spain and the expected outburst in France. He must, certainly, also have anticipated that France would express herself on the subject at Berlin as well as at Madrid.[9] It was impossible to say exactly what form the French action would take, and therefore no precise instructions could be given in advance; but his general point of view had been so thoroughly drilled into his closer collaborators that we shall find Thile and Abeken repeating it, when the time came, like well-trained schoolboys. In short, it was a case of standing to one's guns before an expected assault, in a position carefully picked and deemed to be impregnable.

The attack was delivered in two forms. About noon on July 4, Le Sourd, the French chargé d'affaires, in accordance with orders from Paris, called upon Thile, and stated that his government had been informed that Marshal Prim had offered the Spanish crown to the Prince of Hohenzollern, who had accepted it. He desired to know whether the Prussian government had had anything to do with the affair ("si le gouvernement prussien était étranger à cette négociation"). Thile, who was probably already informed that the news of the acceptance had reached Paris,[10] replied with a categorical denial. The Prussian government, he said, was absolutely ignorant of this affair; for the Prussian government this affair did not exist; he was not in a position to give any information about any negotiations that might have taken place between Marshal Prim and the Hohenzollerns. With a delightful touch of irony for one who had known all the details of the negotiation for the past four months, he added that he had, indeed, heard that some Hohenzollern had been mentioned as a candidate for the Spanish throne, but was still in doubt as to which one of these princes was referred to. At

[8] Fester, *BA*, No. 246 b.

[9] His letter of June to Bucher, already cited, indicates that.

[10] The Wolff Telegraph Agency had published that day a Paris despatch to this effect (see No. 236).

any rate, the Prussian government considered that the statesmen and people of Spain were entitled to offer their crown to anyone whom they might think fit, and that it concerned the person alone to whom the offer was made to accept or reject it.[11]

Thile had evidently learned his lesson well, and had answered precisely as Bismarck would have desired. But, from a broader standpoint, if Franco-Prussian negotiations were to lead to anything (save war), this was an unhappy beginning. The French query was put in irritating form, and the Prussian reply was worse. For the French government knew too much about the affair to be deluded by any such professions of Prussian ignorance: how expect them not to feel that they were being trifled with and lied to? Nor could they accept the distinction which Thile had hinted at between what Prussian ministers knew officially and what they might know as private persons. Nor could they admit the thesis, so incredible to those familiar with the customs of German dynasties, that a Prussian prince could have accepted a foreign crown without the knowledge and consent of the King of Prussia. And, finally, did not Thile's statements amount to an assertion that his government did not desire even to discuss the matter further?[12] Hence, it is not difficult to understand the exasperation with which this "derisory answer" was received at Paris.[13]

Meanwhile, already before this reply arrived, apparently, the French ministers had undertaken a second *démarche*, which seemed of a more promising character. Baron von Werther, the Prussian ambassador at Paris, was about to set out for Ems to

[11] On this first diplomatic skirmish: Thile's Tg. of July 4 to Bismarck and the King (No. 1 below); Thile to Canitz, July 5 (No. 9); Le Sourd's Tg. to Gramont, July 4 (Gramont, pp. 29, 30; Benedetti, *Ma Mission en Prusse*, pp. 423, 424); Ollivier, xiv, pp. 31, 32, who seems to have drawn upon Le Sourd's unpublished longer despatch, mentioned in his telegram; and Loftus to Granville, July 6 (*British Blue Book*, No. 21). There are some discrepancies between these sources, notably as to whether Le Sourd really presented his question in the guise of a formal interpellation, which he himself denies, but which Thile flatly asserts.

[12] Since "for it the affair did not exist," and since, according to Thile, the question concerned no one except the Prince and the Spanish people.

[13] The phrase is Gramont's (*op. cit.*, p. 42). Ollivier sums up by saying: "à Berlin on nous fermait la porte au nez, et on se moquait de nous" (xiv, p. 35).

pay his respects to his sovereign.[14] Werther was an honest and rather impressionable diplomat, with whom the French Foreign Minister, the Duc de Gramont, was on excellent terms, since they had been colleagues for years at the court of Vienna. If through this well-intentioned intermediary the French government could get at the King and appeal to his chivalry and well-known love of peace, they might hope to achieve quicker and more satisfactory results than could be attained in dealing with the usually tongue-tied Thile or his irascible superior at Varzin. Hence, Gramont on July 4 begged Werther not to fail to visit him before his departure; and when the ambassador accordingly called that evening at the Quai d'Orsay, he was received not only by Gramont but by Ollivier, the head of the cabinet.[15]

Werther arrived already much impressed, it would seem, by what he had learned during the day of the excitement in Paris.[16] The French ministers felt encouraged to take a strong line. They did not content themselves with pointing out the "extremely

[14] This trip had long been planned and had been announced a week in advance. See Nos. 6, 10, 21, 36.

[15] This interview has hitherto been very little known. Fester was the first historian to call attention to its importance and to speak of a "Werther mission" to Ems, preceding the famous one of Benedetti; but he was forced to admit that the incident would remain obscure until Werther's report of it was published (*ED*, pp. 25, 26). That report is printed below as No. 11. Additional sources bearing upon the episode are: Werther to Bismarck, July 4, Tg. of 7.50 P.M. (No. 3); Bernstorff to King William, July 6 (No. 23); Abeken to the Foreign Office, July 7 (No. 30); Solms to Bismarck, July 7 (No. 38); Gramont, pp. 35, 36; Ollivier, xiv, pp. 28, 29; Lyons to Granville, July 5 (*British Blue Book*, No. 2); Metternich to Beust, July 5, Tg. 436, and July 8, reports 37 A–H and 37 D (*V.A.*, ix, 97, *France, Rapports*, 1870; report 37 A–H also printed in part in the *Staatsarchiv*, xix [1870], No. 4141); Abeken to Karl Anton, July 6 (Zingeler, pp. 249, 260); the *Life of Abeken*, p. 248; Waldersee, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, i, p. 71.

The question as to who took the initiative in bringing about this interview can now be settled from Werther's report: both he and Gramont had sought a conversation that day. The date and time (given rather diversely in some sources) can also be fixed: July 4, about 6 or 7 P.M. ("the evening," Werther says, but obviously before the sending of his telegram of 7.50 P.M. [No. 3], and after Ollivier had left the Corps Législatif, whose session closed that day at 6.10 P.M.). Werther's report enables one to judge of the rather conflicting accounts that Gramont and Ollivier have left of the incident, and also shows that Werther met the two French ministers together, instead of seeing each of them separately, as Ollivier's statement might seem to imply.

[16] See his telegram of 4.35 P.M. (No. 2).

painful impression" produced by the news of Leopold's acceptance upon the Emperor, the legislative chambers, and public opinion, which would see in the secrecy of the negotiation "an unfriendly proceeding" on the part of Prussia. While affirming that the French government desired good relations, they declared categorically that France would not "tolerate" the establishment of any Prussian prince upon the Spanish throne;[17] the Empire would not endure such an humiliation;[18] they would oppose the candidacy by all the means in their power.[19] They even went so far as to hint that the Prince might meet the fate of Maximilian in Mexico.[20] Appealing then to the wisdom of the King, they expressed the hope that His Majesty would refuse to give the candidacy his sanction, thereby rendering a service of the greatest value to the cause of peace and to the good relations between France and Prussia.[21]

This vigorous portrayal of the situation seemed to produce the desired effect on Werther. While honestly professing his complete ignorance about the matter, the ambassador promised to lay the impressions of the French government before the King, and he apparently raised hopes that he would urge the renunciation of the candidacy.[22] He also did not discourage Gramont's suggestion that he should telegraph from Ems the results of his endeavors.[23] In short, the interview must have left the French ministers in the belief that they had made a convert and started a promising diplomatic action.[24] At any rate, they had for the

[17] Ollivier, xiv, p. 29; Lyons to Granville, July 5.

[18] Abeken to the Foreign Office, July 7.

[19] Metternich to Beust, July 5. Abeken to Karl Anton, July 6.

[20] Abeken to the Foreign Office, July 7.

[21] Werther in his official report very much 'toned down' the language of the French ministers, as one can see by comparing that report with what he himself related at Ems and what Gramont told foreign diplomats at Paris.

[22] Gramont told Metternich that Werther had "promised to use all his efforts" in this sense (Metternich's report of July 8, 37 A–H), and he must have said much the same thing to Lyons, the British ambassador (see No. 23).

[23] Cf. Solms to Bismarck, July 7 (No. 38). Metternich to Beust, July 8, No. 37 A–H.

[24] Cf. Ollivier's language to Metternich as to Werther's mission: "Son intervention à Ems, pense-t-il, sera très-active, vu l'état de frayeur et d'ahurissement avec lequel il a quitté Paris" (Metternich to Beust, July 8, No. 37 D).

first time made a concrete proposal as to how to end the crisis. They had begun their campaign to induce the King of Prussia to forbid the candidacy. They had also made something of an initial breach in Bismarck's defensive position.

The first news of the French diplomatic offensive reached Varzin on the afternoon of July 4, through Thile's telegram as to his talk with Le Sourd. Bismarck's first reaction was one of anger. He found the French inquiry "very impertinent," and thoroughly approved of Thile's reply.[25] He at once suggested two counter-strokes: if Le Sourd should renew his query, Thile should ask for a written formulation of it, "in order that he might take the King's commands";[26] and Werther at Paris should be informed of the "interpellation," and charged to "express our surprise and to say that the Prince and the Spanish government were masters of their own actions."[27] In other words, Prussia resented the French attempt even to discuss the matter with her.

By the following morning Bismarck had also learned something of the second French *démarche.* Two brief telegrams from Werther alluded to the emotion at Paris, intimated that he had had a talk with Gramont and Ollivier, and announced that he was coming to Ems, intending to lay directly before the King the "extremely grave impressions" of the French ministers.[28] The Chancellor's irritation can be imagined. Werther, never having been initiated into the secret of the candidacy, had, of course, received no instructions for such an emergency; but he had guessed very badly the intentions of his chief, and there was no telling how much harm he might do if he came to Ems. On the other hand, there were obvious objections to forbidding a journey so long announced by ordering him to stay at his post. That would look as if Prussia were impressed with the seriousness of the new situation, whereas the essence of her rôle was to appear perfectly aloof, indifferent, unimpressed. Hence, in the telegram sent to Ems on the afternoon of the 5th, Bismarck did, indeed, hint at the inconvenience of Werther's journey at such

[25] Bismarck to the Foreign Office, Tg. of 9.47 P.M. (No. 4).
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] Bucher to Thile, Tg. of 10 P.M. (No. 5).
[28] Werther's Tgs. of July 4, 4.35 and 7.50 P.M. (Nos. 2 and 3).

a moment, but made no positive suggestion that it be countermanded.[29] On the other hand, he exerted himself to impress upon the royal mind once more the cardinal principles upon which his whole strategy was based. Werther ought to have refused any discussion of questions that concerned only Spain and the Prince of Hohenzollern. Coining a phrase which Prussian diplomats were henceforth to use on all occasions, Bismarck declared: "Respecting the independence of Spain and not called upon to interfere in Spanish constitutional questions, we leave the latter to the Spaniards and to those who wish to become such." If France wished to intervene in such matters, that was her affair and no concern of Prussia's. "The acceptance of a discussion [on such a question] would weaken our otherwise unassailable position." Above all things, Prussia must avoid giving the impression that she could be intimidated.[30]

Not content with this, Bismarck on the same day drafted a long letter to Abeken, for use with the King, which throws very interesting light, not indeed upon his opinions, but on his tactics during this first phase of the crisis.[31] The most essential thing was to hold back the King from any compromises or concessions. Hence, as was not unusual with him in such cases, he began by urging that the firmest and boldest course (which, as matters turned out, led straight to war) would really be the best guarantee of peace. "The firm and fearless attitude which we have always hitherto adopted in the face of every disturbance at Paris, is the most essential factor to which we owe the preservation of peace. France, in my opinion, fears a serious breach more than we; but if we give ground for the belief that *we* are the more afraid, French insolence will soon leave us no other choice than war." [32] A sec-

[29] See No. 13 (Bucher to Thile, Tg. of 5.45 P.M., reporting the Tg. just sent to Abeken). A somewhat ambiguous allusion to this in the *Life of Abeken*, p. 248, has led Fester into the erroneous statement that "Bismarck adjured the King to order the . . . ambassador to remain temporarily at his post" (*ED*, 38).

[30] No. 13.

[31] This hitherto unknown document is printed below as No. 16.

[32] Cf. his letter to the King, of April 3, 1866 (at the time when he was steering his peaceful sovereign into the war with Austria): "Ich besorge den übelsten Einfluss auf die weitre Entwicklung der politischen Lage, wenn man in Wien . . . den Eindruck erhält, dass unsre Friedensliebe grösser sei als die Oestreichs. . . . Jedes

ond argument employed was to suggest, supposing the case reversed and some French prince elected to the throne of Sweden, for instance, how little attention France would pay to even "the gravest impressions" or the interpellations of Prussia.

But with respect to tactics, this letter, as compared with the telegram of that afternoon, marks an appreciable change, which may have been due to further reflection or to the realization that the ambassador's trip could no longer be prevented.[33] After all, Werther had accepted a conversation on the forbidden topic, and was going to Ems to report about it, and would have to carry some kind of a reply back to Paris. Hence, driven out of his original *noli me tangere* position by his ambassador's mistake, Bismarck now outlined a reply that might be made.

A discussion was authorized, but what a discussion! With regard to the King's past participation in the affair (which obviously could not be denied altogether), Werther was to inform the French ministers that, as far as he had been able to learn, His Majesty had, indeed, known of the intention of the Spanish government to offer the crown to *a* Hohenzollern prince; that the King had refused to exercise any influence in the matter; that he had until recently had ground to suppose that none of these princes was willing to accept; that if they had now changed their minds, His Majesty did not know, and could express no opinion about, the motives for their decisions, etc. The whole statement was a model of Bismarck's art of *suppressio veri et suggestio falsi*.[34]

As to the general standpoint of the Prussian government, Werther was authorized to offer the equally candid and illuminating considerations: that Prussia would not have supposed that

Schwanken bei uns ermuthigt Oestreich, und erhöht die Aussicht auf eine Situation, der wir nur auf kriegerischem Wege mit Ehren entgehn können" (*Gedanken und Erinnerungen, Anhang*, i, p. 128).

[33] I am inclined to think that this letter was written on the evening of July 5 (despatched by post the 6th, and received at Ems the 7th — see No. 37 — probably by the 11.15 train). In that case, during the interval since the sending of the afternoon telegram to Abeken, Bismarck may have received some news (e.g. a copy of No. 6), that convinced him that Werther's trip could not now be hindered.

[34] The classic example of which is the chapter in his memoirs dealing with the Hohenzollern Candidacy and its sequel.

France intended to interfere in the internal affairs of Spain, as such interventions usually led to unpleasant consequences for the countries that undertook them; that Prussia had thought that French interest in the matter would be confined to opposing the republican or the Montpensierist solution; that Bismarck personally would have supposed that a Hohenzollern prince more closely related to the Imperial house than to the Prussian royal family would be more satisfactory to France than any Bourbon king. At all events, France was the only judge of her own interests. If she chose to combat the candidacy, she was free to do so. But let her not try to draw Prussia into the affair. Coming then to the crux of the question and closing the door in advance to the French request (of which he was not yet informed) that the King should forbid Leopold's acceptance, Bismarck declared that his sovereign had already done all that he was legally and politically entitled to do: he had tried to dissuade from accepting. To go beyond that would be "contrary to the King's self-respect and to the constitution of the country"!

In his first public statement after war with France had become certain, Bismarck declared that, if at the outset the French government had been concerned only to secure Prussia's good offices for the purpose of ending the candidacy, they would have found the easiest and most appropriate road to this goal in a confidential understanding with the Prussian government. Later, however, the threatening speech of the Duc de Gramont in the Corps Législatif had destroyed every possibility of such a confidential discussion.[35] The implication was that down to the time when France began to resort to menaces, Prussia was willing to enter into a friendly agreement for the withdrawal of the candidacy. Nothing could be further from the truth, as is shown by the letter which has just been analyzed. At the time when this letter was written, France had issued no threats. All that had happened,

[35] Bismarck's speech in the Bundesrat of July 16, 1870 (*Stenographische Berichte des Norddeutschen Reichstages, I. Ausserordentliche Session, 1870, Anlagen*, pp. 8, 9). Heinrich von Sybel has advanced the same thesis even more strongly: if France had only courteously requested the Prussian government to use its good offices at Sigmaringen, the candidacy would have been disposed of immediately (*op. cit.*, vii, pp. 198, 199).

as far as Bismarck then knew,[36] was that the French ministers had told Werther of their "extremely grave impressions," and that the French chargé at Berlin had inquired whether the Prussian government had had a hand in the candidacy. Nevertheless, the Chancellor, far from being ready for a "confidential understanding," had at first intended to permit no discussion at all; when obliged to abandon that position, he proposed to put the French off with a mass of patently hypocritical and mendacious verbiage; and he was for refusing the one thing which could have formed the basis of a friendly agreement, namely, that the King should order the Prince to withdraw his acceptance.

While Bismarck's general attitude at that time is clear enough, it is not so easy to explain one of his manoeuvres on July 6. In telegrams of that day to Ems and Berlin, he suggested that Leopold "should be informed of the attitude of the French cabinet and should seek to win confidence at Paris, in order to avert, if possible, the danger that the money and influence of France will be spent on conspiracies in the Spanish army." [37] In view of the fact that the Chancellor had hitherto, as far as we know, dissuaded the Hohenzollerns from making any overtures to Napoleon,[38] this proposal is something of a surprise. While various interpretations can and probably will be advanced, it seems to me most reasonable to accept the motive suggested in the telegram as the real one: namely, the desire, if possible, to keep the French amused until the election in Spain was over. Of all the means which France had to ruin the candidacy, the easiest and surest, perhaps, was to spend some money judiciously in Spain, and in such activities Prussia could scarcely compete effectively.[39]

[36] It must be understood that when Bismarck wrote the letter he knew next to nothing of what the French ministers had said to Werther on July 4. The latter's long report had not been sent or telegraphed to Berlin, but was carried by him to Ems and laid before the King on July 6.

[37] Tg. of Bucher to Thile, 12.15 P.M. (repeating one to Abeken) No. 19.

[38] See King William's letter to Karl Anton of July 2 (Zingeler, p. 251).

[39] Cf. King William's letter to Queen Augusta of July 7: "Dass er [Napoleon] und sein Gouvernement sous main das Votum der Cortes gegen Hohenzollern zu gewinnen suchen wird und wenn es Millionen kostet, ist mit aller Bestimmtheit vorherzusehen; ja es wird nicht übermässig schwer sein zu réussieren, da das Gesetz zur Königswahl sehr schwer auszuführen ist. . . . Dass *wir* und ebensowenig die

If this danger could be averted for a short time, until the Spanish people had definitely committed themselves to a Hohenzollern king, and the price were only a few courtesies from Leopold, even Bismarck was willing to counsel this vicarious sacrifice.[40]

But the danger which the Chancellor had most to guard against lay at Ems — in the King's conciliatory disposition and strong will to peace. And all too close to Ems was Koblenz, temporarily the residence of Queen Augusta, Bismarck's old opponent, who had taken alarm at the first news from Paris,[41] and who was now, presumably, using all her influence — and her daily letters — in favor of concessions to France. Thile and Abeken must have been equally uneasy about the situation when they assured each other, in the true spirit of their chief, that "to beat a retreat *now* would be, not only undignified, but extremely dangerous," [42] and "it [the candidacy] is *for us* a *fait accompli*, and *we* can no longer yield, *least of all* before French threats." [43] Abeken viewed Werther's approaching visit with misgivings, and endeavored both to correct the ambassador's point of view before he arrived,[44] and, at the last moment, to keep him from com-

Hohenzollern einen Taler geben werden, um Stimmen zu erkaufen, ist gewiss sicher, und daher hat Frankreich freies Spiel." (Oncken, *Unser Heldenkaiser*, p. 186.)

[40] I imagine that in certain quarters this telegram will be taken as another "decisive proof" that Bismarck did not desire or foresee a war with France, as has been the case with certain other documents vastly less susceptible of such an interpretation. Whatever else it proves, I think it does not sustain Fester's theory that Bismarck had, already on July 5, made up his mind to sacrifice the candidacy (*ED*, pp. 35, 36, 227, 228). That theory is based chiefly on an assumed circular of the Prussian government to its embassies abroad, of which Fester claims to be able to reconstitute the text. This "circular of July 5" never existed. The fact is simply that some brief explanations of the Prussian standpoint were gradually and at separate times transmitted to the more important embassies — on July 5 to Werther and to Canitz (Nos. 5 and 9), on July 6 to Reuss (No. 17), on July 7 to Bernstorff (No. 29), and on July 10 to Schweinitz (No. 95) — and the contents of these telegrams would not sustain Fester's thesis.

[41] She must at once have telegraphed her fears to Thile, — a special friend of the royal couple, — for by the evening of the 5th he had written to reassure her (see No. 14).

[42] Thile to Abeken, July 5, Tg. of 7 P.M. (No. 14).

[43] Abeken to the Foreign Office, July 5, Tg. of 10 A.M. (No. 8).

[44] No. 8. Thile was equally concerned to indoctrinate Werther properly: see Nos. 5 and 14.

ing;[45] but the telegram on the latter subject reached Paris only after Werther had left.

The dreaded diplomat reached Ems early on the morning of the 6th.[46] His first words to Count Waldersee, who met him at the station, were: "The devil is loose at Paris: it looks very much like war."[47] Although he was now informed as to Bismarck's standpoint,[48] and promised the anxious Abeken not to "worry" the King, the ambassador's oral and written reports must have made a deep impression on his sovereign. Only two days had passed since the first tidings of trouble arrived, and already, William learned, all France was talking of war against Prussia.[49] Bismarck had, probably, desired to keep such apprehensions far from the royal mind, — for the present,[50] — and he had strongly insisted that nothing should be done which would encourage the belief that Prussia could be intimidated.[51] Nevertheless, the King now began to gravitate toward an idea which, if realized, was very likely to be taken in France in the sense that Bismarck feared: the idea, namely, that in the interests of peace the candidacy should be renounced by the Hohenzollerns themselves. William would not, of course, order or even

[45] After receiving the Tg. in which Bismarck alluded to the inconveniences of Werther's trip (No. 13), Abeken reported to the King and obtained his permission to telegraph the ambassador in a sense that strongly suggested, though it did not command (as is stated in the *Life of Abeken*, p. 248), that he should stay at his post (Tg. of 7.45 P.M., No. 15).

[46] Werther had had a hitherto unrecorded, but not particularly important, talk with Ollivier just before his departure (see No. 12). He left Paris at 5 P.M. and arrived at Ems at 9 A.M.

[47] Waldersee, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, i, p. 71.

[48] By an instruction telegraphed to him by Thile on the morning of the 5th (see No. 5).

[49] King William to Karl Anton, July 6 (Zingeler, p. 251).

[50] This may fairly be concluded, I think, both from the general tone of all the telegrams from Varzin in these days, and especially from the Chancellor's letter to Abeken of July 5, in which there is no hint that the Hohenzollern Candidacy might lead directly to war, but it is suggested only that if Prussia allowed herself to be intimidated in this case, the French would become so overbearing that there would soon be no possibility of living with them in peace. The men around the King at Ems were certainly surprised at Bismarck's apparent refusal at this time to take the danger of war seriously (cf. Waldersee, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, i, p. 72; *Life of Abeken*, p. 248).

[51] Tg. and letter to Abeken of July 5 (Nos. 13 and 16).

directly advise them to do so, but he could throw out a hint, which ought to prove sufficient.

Hence, on the afternoon of July 6, the King wrote Karl Anton a letter, accompanied by a longer one from Abeken and by a copy of Werther's report, for the purpose of bringing the whole dangerous situation to the Prince's attention. Bismarck's suggestion that some overtures *ought* to be made to Napoleon was, indeed, mentioned, but the matter was left entirely to Karl Anton's and Leopold's decision. The really significant part of the King's letter, apparently, was the inquiry, the exact form of which we do not know, as to what the Sigmaringen princes intended to do in the face of this situation.[52] That William took this step immediately after receiving Werther's report, is, perhaps, the best proof of the skill the French ministers had shown

[52] These statements undoubtedly require explanation. In the text of the King's letter, as hitherto published (Zingeler, p. 251; *Aus dem Leben König Karls*, ii, p. 98), there is no indication of any inquiry as to the intentions of the Hohenzollern princes; nor is there any allusion to the subject in the published text of Karl Anton's reply of July 8 (Zingeler, pp. 251, 252). On the other hand, we know that on July 9 the King told Benedetti that he had put himself into communication with Karl Anton and that "il l'avait interpellé sur ses intentions et sur celles du prince Léopold, son fils, ainsi que sur la manière dont ils envisageaient l'émotion . . . en France" (Benedetti, *Ma Mission en Prusse*, p. 335). We also know that in the reply from Sigmaringen which reached Ems on the morning of the 10th, Karl Anton had set forth the reasons why he did not feel able to renounce the candidacy, unless the King demanded it (King William to Queen Augusta, July 10 and 11, Oncken, *op. cit.*, pp. 186, 187; to which may now be added Abeken's Tg. to Bismarck of 10.50 A.M., July 10, No. 77). Fester, who was the first historian to notice these discrepancies, was thereby led to conclude that there must have been two additional letters transmitted, the text of which has not been published: one from William of July 7 or 8, in which he made the inquiry referred to, and one from Karl Anton of the 9th, in which he answered that question (*ED*, pp. 84, 85, 232). This hypothesis, however, seems to me extremely improbable. Zingeler has attested that the Sigmaringen archives do not contain these additional letters (Fester, *ED*, p. 232, records this, but still clings to his hypothesis), and Abeken's reports to Bismarck, published in this volume, refer only to one exchange of letters between Ems and Sigmaringen down to July 10 (obviously the King's letter of July 6, and the Prince's reply of the 8th). The true solution of the problem seems to me very simple. Both of the texts published by Zingeler are incomplete, are little more than torsos, and the omissions were pretty certainly made because of an exaggerated fear of "indiscretions." It may, therefore, be assumed with confidence, I think, that the excised portions of the King's letter of July 6 contained the inquiry above mentioned, and the excised parts of Karl Anton's letter of the 8th contained the answer.

in directing their main attack upon Ems, the weakest point in Bismarck's "unassailable position."

Meanwhile, on this same afternoon of the 6th, a momentous event had happened at Paris. Driven on by an excited public opinion and convinced, perhaps, that extraordinary measures were necessary in order to prove to Spain and Prussia that France was in earnest and must be listened to, the French cabinet had determined to reply immediately and in the boldest fashion to an interpellation presented in the chamber. The declaration read by the Duc de Gramont in the Corps Législatif was, indeed, moderate enough in its earlier portions, but it ended with the ringing words:

> But we do not believe that respect for the rights of a neighboring people obliges us to permit a foreign power, by placing one of its princes on the throne of Charles V, to disturb to our detriment the present equilibrium in Europe and to place the interests and the honor of France in peril. This eventuality, we firmly hope, will not be realized. To prevent it, we count both upon the wisdom of the German, and upon the friendship of the Spanish, people. But if it should be otherwise, strong in your support, gentlemen, and in that of the nation, we should know how to do our duty without hesitation and without weakness.[53]

In spite of the unprecedented storm of applause with which this pronouncement was greeted, in spite of the elaborate defense which its authors have since presented for it,[54] the almost unanimous judgment of contemporary diplomats and of historians has been that the declaration was a grave mistake. The clearly accentuated distinction between Spain and Prussia; the accusation hurled at the latter of doing precisely what she was formally denying that she had done, endeavoring to place one of her princes on the Spanish throne; and, above all, the unmistakable threat of war unless the will of France were done — all this was likely to exasperate public opinion in Germany, to make any concessions from Prussia doubly difficult, to give Bismarck a grievance, if he wanted one, and by its premature and exaggerated vehemence to compromise the cause of France. There may be times, as

[53] This declaration is printed in Ollivier, xiv, pp. 109, 110, Fester, *BA*, No. 289, and in many other places.

[54] Gramont, pp. 36–46; Ollivier, xiv, pp. 83–150.

Ollivier has urged, when a firm and unequivocal public statement of a government's intentions will best serve the cause of peace; but so dangerous a procedure can be justified only after all other means have failed, at the close, not at the beginning, of a negotiation. It may be true that the Hohenzollern Candidacy would not have been withdrawn but for the conviction that war was otherwise inevitable; but surely that conviction could have been brought home to Prussia and to the Hohenzollerns by more discreet channels and in a less provocative way than by a resounding declaration brandished in the face of all Europe.

At all events, the immediate repercussion in Germany was not so grave as might have been expected. King William's first reaction was that 'the French ministers had spoken very sensibly,' though he could not see of what wrong Prussia could fairly be accused.[55] But as fuller reports from Paris [56] brought out the significance of what had taken place, and despatches from London and St. Petersburg [57] showed the disapproval with which the declaration had been received in those capitals, the King's attitude stiffened. Independently of any pressure from Varzin, it would seem, the telegrams sent forth from Ems now began to speak of Gramont's "unwise, premature, and exaggerated declarations"; France had "compromised herself," "placed herself in the wrong"; "the King holds that the preservation of a quiet and firm attitude — *le calme de la force* — on our side is the only thing that *we* can do in order to avert war." [58] Moreover, William pondered the question "whether Gramont's language in the Corps Législatif, especially the mention of a *puissance étrangère* which wishes to place one of its princes on the Spanish throne, does not require a sharper attitude and a public repudiation of this attack in some form." [59] He also telegraphed to Bismarck his conviction that "we owe it to *Germany* to make a public statement, in order that it also may not believe that Prussia has in-

[55] See his letter of July 7 to the Queen, Oncken, p. 185.

[56] See Nos. 22, 31, 38–41.

[57] See Nos. 34 and 35.

[58] See especially the Tgs. of July 9 to Bernstorff at London and Solms at Paris, Nos. 58 and 61.

[59] Abeken transmitted this suggestion to Thile in a letter of July 8 (No. 54).

volved it, or desires to involve it, in a war with France." [60] It is noteworthy that this first suggestion of a Prussian counter-offensive, this first hint of the idea that later developed into the Ems Telegram, apparently emanated from the King's spontaneous initiative.

It is evident, however, that behind this appearance of calm resolution a great deal of anxiety and uncertainty prevailed at Ems in those days. Werther, admitted daily to long conferences with the King, continued his efforts in the cause of peace, and even Abeken seems to have succumbed somewhat to his influence.[61] By the 7th, both men were agreed with their sovereign in hoping that the candidacy would be eliminated, either through the voluntary withdrawal of the Hohenzollerns or through French activities in Spain.[62]

It is much more difficult to estimate the effect that Gramont's speech produced at Varzin. The first news of it arrived there on the morning of July 7,[63] through a brief telegram of Solms,[64] announcing that Gramont had made a "very stiff declaration" in the Chamber, of a nature amicable toward Spain but unfriendly toward Prussia, which had been greeted with frantic applause. Along with it came a despatch from Count Bernstorff, showing the belief in London that war was inevitable unless the candidacy were withdrawn.[65] Bismarck's first reaction was to telegraph to Thile to begin a vigorous attack in unofficial newspapers upon the presumption of the French in pretending to make such a

[60] See the King's note to Abeken of July 8, 3.30 P.M. (written, doubtless, under the fresh impression of the long reports just received from Paris), and Abeken's Tg. to Bismarck of 4.50 P.M. (Nos. 44 and 45).

[61] Waldersee, summing up the situation at Ems on July 8 just before his return to Paris, mentions Werther's conviction that, if Leopold did not quickly withdraw, war was inevitable; speaks of the *Ratlosigkeit* prevailing in the King's entourage; and deplores Abeken's lack of independence and Bismarck's absence (*Denkwürdigkeiten*, i, pp. 74, 75).

[62] Waldersee, i, p. 72; William to Augusta, July 7, Oncken, pp. 185–187; Abeken to the Foreign Office, July 7 (No. 30).

[63] Contrary to the generally accepted statement (based on a passage in Keudell) that the first news arrived on the morning of the 8th.

[64] Chargé d'affaires at Paris. See No. 22.

[65] No. 23. The two telegrams referred to were forwarded from Berlin to Varzin on July 7 at 9.15 A.M. (See No. 26.)

purely Spanish question the subject of parliamentary discussion.[66] This was the opening shot in a press campaign which henceforth was to be prosecuted with ever-increasing animosity and virulence.[67]

That afternoon the text of Gramont's speech came into the Chancellor's possession.[68] What then took place in his mind it is not easy to say. For the next twenty-four hours Varzin became strangely silent toward the outside world.[69] It may be assumed that Bismarck was taking time to think the situation through. From two outside sources which, although unreliable in details, agree fairly well in their general sense, we hear of stormy outbursts and wild projects; an explosion over the breakfast table, on seeing Gramont's speech in the newspapers; a first impulse to demand that minister's dismissal, or to propose to the King the mobilization of the army and an immediate attack on unarmed France.[70]

[66] Tgs. of 11.45 A.M. and 1.50 P.M., July 7 (Nos. 28 and 33). From the second Tg. one would judge that Bismarck was especially concerned at that moment to stir up Spanish pride and to guard against that separation of Spain from Prussia which Gramont appeared to have intended. Bismarck's willingness to stoop to any means appears in his quite gratuitous singling out of the Empress Eugénie for attack: "Will Eugénie einen neuen Spanischen Erbfolge-Krieg?"

[67] Bismarck's manipulation of the German press at that time is now fairly well known to us through the diary of Busch, his chief agent in the matter (*Tagebuchblätter*, i, pp. 31–54) and Ed. Schulz, *Bismarck's Einfluss auf die deutsche Presse (Juli, 1870)*. This is the classic example, down to recent times at least, of how 'public opinion' is manufactured on the eve of a war.

[68] The text as received by the Wolff Agency was telegraphed by Thile to Varzin about 1.15 P.M. (July 7); see No. 32. A telegram from Count Solms, giving the text as published in the *Journal officiel* (No. 38), reached Berlin at 3.23 that afternoon, and was later sent on to Varzin. Just when, I am not able to say, but it seems unlikely that so important a despatch would not have been forwarded that same afternoon.

[69] I could find no telegrams from Varzin after 1.15 P.M. of July 7 down to 5.15 P.M. of July 8, and nothing of real importance until late on the latter evening. This is the longest gap in Bismarck's recorded activities during the whole period of the crisis.

[70] These two sources are Keudell, *op. cit.*, pp. 429, 440, 441 (Keudell was then a guest at Varzin), and the account printed by A. Andrae auf Roman in the *Kreuzzeitung*, Sept. 5, 1895, which goes back to a letter of Sept. 6, 1870, to Andrae from Moritz von Blankenburg, who in turn was repeating what Bismarck had told him in late July (text of the passage in the *KZ* is reprinted by Oncken, p. 124). Keudell's statement as to how surprised Bismarck was on the 8th of July by the news from

The sober second thought, however, was against any precipitate action. It would have been very hard, as Bismarck explained to a friend some weeks later, to win over the King to such a 'preventive war'; and the rest of Germany and of Europe would have condemned Prussia as the disturber of the peace.[71] Decidedly, the situation was not yet ripe for a counter-attack. One may surmise that he was further confirmed in this conviction by two important bits of news received just at this moment. The first was the announcement that the Spanish government, in the face of all French remonstrances, had decided to convoke the Cortes for July 20 in extraordinary session, to put through Leopold's election.[72] The second was the warning that Benedetti, the French ambassador to Prussia, was about to arrive at Ems on some kind of mission to the King.[73] After the French had burned their bridges behind them on the 6th of July, and with this terrifying date, the 20th, staring them in the face, it might be presumed that they would soon plunge into some new act of folly. Bismarck could afford to wait. Hence, in the telegram by which at last he announced his verdict upon Gramont's declaration, he contented himself with saying that, while he found its language "insolent and bumptious beyond all expectation," still 'he disliked to make international protests over a parliamentary speech.' "The newspapers, however, must be very rough, and as many of them as possible."[74]

Paris is often cited to prove that down to that time the Chancellor had never dreamed that war might come from the candidacy. The surprise on July 8 cannot have been so great as Keudell says, however, for Bismarck already had the news the day before; and, in general, Keudell is only a mediocre witness as to what Bismarck said and did, and no authority whatever as to what Bismarck thought.

[71] This part of his alleged story to Blankenburg (see preceding note) seems to me probable enough.

[72] This decision, adopted at the cabinet council held at La Granja on the night of July 4, without any pressure from Berlin as far as can be ascertained, was announced by a Spanish circular despatch of July 6, communicated at the various capitals of Europe on the 7th. Bismarck must have learned of it on the afternoon of the 7th (see No. 32).

[73] Abeken to Bismarck, Tg. of 7.45 P.M., July 8 (No. 49).

[74] Bismarck to Thile, 10.45 P.M., July 8 (No. 52). Other comments of his of July 7 or 8 upon the declaration are to be found in the marginal notes which he appended to Solms's despatch (see No. 31) and in those reported by Busch (i, pp. 34,

But the declaration would serve immediately for something more than polemics in the press. It was henceforth to be used on all occasions as a new and final reason why in this crisis no concessions whatever could be expected from Prussia.[75] And in spite of his professed repugnance for such a procedure, Bismarck was still toying with the idea of using this grievance in order to start a diplomatic offensive against France. Already on the 9th, Solms was instructed to say, if an opportunity presented itself, that Prussia had no explanations to make to France, but might rather expect them from her.[76] And the same day the Chancellor suggested at Ems that "we should intimate, either through Benedetti or Solms, that if after Gramont's threats no reassurance were given us, the King would convoke the Reichstag, in order to determine upon his attitude in accord with the representatives of the nation." [77] Obviously, the yearning for action was growing within him, and would not much longer be repressed.

35), which were probably attached to the text of the speech furnished by the Wolff Agency, which Thile had sent to him (see No. 32). Cf. also the voluminous "themes" for newspaper articles which Bucher, under Bismarck's guidance, sent on from Varzin on the 8th and the following days, Busch, i, pp. 32 ff.

[75] Cf. Nos. 50, 62, 63, 83, 88, 89; Bismarck's above-cited declaration to the Bundesrat on July 16; and his memoirs, ii, p. 84.

[76] No. 63. [77] No. 71.

CHAPTER IV

THE CRISIS. SECOND PHASE. JULY 9–12

It was only after their declaration of July 6 that the French government set about organizing a comprehensive campaign to defeat the Hohenzollern Candidacy. In the next two days no less than four separate diplomatic actions were undertaken by them, which do at least attest the sincerity of their desire for peace: namely, an effort to enlist the aid of the other powers (England, Russia, Austria, and Italy); renewed pressure at Madrid; secret, indirect approaches to the Sigmaringen princes;[1] and, above all, a negotiation with Prussia. In view of the hopelessness of further discussions at Berlin, this last negotiation was to be conducted at Ems. Thither Count Benedetti, recalled from his vacation at Wildbad, was directed to proceed in haste, charged with the arduous and delicate mission of inducing the King "if not to order, at least to advise" his young relative to renounce his candidacy.[2] "Never was there a more important mission," wrote Gramont; no equivocations and no delays were to be permitted; and in case of a refusal, "c'est la guerre."[3]

[1] These overtures were undertaken by Napoleon himself, without the knowledge of his ministers, and were made through King Leopold of Belgium (v. Zingeler, p. 254) and later through the Spanish and Roumanian representatives at Paris, Olózaga and Strat (v. Ollivier, xiv, pp. 138–141, 206–209).

[2] The instructions sent to Benedetti on July 7 are printed in his book *Ma Mission en Prusse*, pp. 315–323.

[3] There are several mysteries that arise in connection with the genesis of the Benedetti mission. While the ambassador in his book says nothing about his actions during the week July 1–8, it is known that on the way from Berlin to Wildbad he stopped at Koblenz on the 4th to visit and dine with his friend, Queen Augusta, and stayed there one or two days longer (Fester, *ED*, pp. 68, 230; Koblenz Tg. of July 5 in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of July 7; Thile to Bismarck, July 8, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen, Anhang*, ii, p. 436). Did he seize the opportunity to discuss the "Spanish bomb" and to work up those fears in the Queen's mind that Thile refers to on the 5th (cf. No. 14)? Was it at that time that he offered to go to Ems (see the beginning of Gramont's despatch to him of the 7th, Benedetti, p. 316), to work on the King's mind in similar fashion, with Augusta's aid? And why, precisely, after allowing the ambassador to go on to Wildbad, and after waiting only a day and a half for the eagerly expected results of the Werther "mission," did Gramont suddenly decide — late on the night of the 7th — to hurry Benedetti back to Ems?

The first news of this impending visitation reached Ems on the evening of the 8th, through a telegram which Benedetti must have despatched while en route from Wildbad.[4] Ill equipped as he was for dealing with a foreign ambassador, with no minister at his side, the King promptly decided to grant an audience and to enter into a detailed discussion.[5] In view of all that was to be said later about the impropriety of such a procedure, it is noteworthy that William took this resolution without asking for Bismarck's advice. He merely telegraphed to Varzin that he would talk to the ambassador in the sense of Bismarck's proposals of July 5 (in the letter to Abeken), would speak "very sternly" about Gramont's declaration, and would not accept a conference of the powers — which Benedetti was expected to propose — unless Spain also agreed to it.[6] It is equally noteworthy that Bismarck's reply, far from protesting against entering into any discussions with Benedetti, simply expressed his approval of what the King intended to say.[7]

Hence, when the ambassador reached Ems at eleven o'clock on the night of the 8th, he was met at the station by a royal adjutant, Prince Radziwill, who could already promise him an audience; and the following morning he learned that this audience would take place at three that afternoon. About noon the friendly Werther came to call, obviously sent upon a reconnoitring expedition, while meantime the Queen, who had come over from Koblenz

[4] Abeken to Bismarck, July 8, Tg. of 7.45 P.M. (No. 49).

[5] Fester conjectures that Benedetti, en route from Wildbad to Ems, stopped at Koblenz once more to see the Queen, and that it was through her intervention that William was informed of the ambassador's mission and induced to grant him an audience (*ED*, 69–71). But, quite apart from the fact that there is no evidence that Benedetti saw the Queen on the 8th during his two hours' wait between trains at Koblenz, this hypothesis is refuted by the now established fact that before the ambassador reached Koblenz (7.50 P.M., according to Bradshaw's *Monthly Continental Railway Guide* for June, 1870), he had already announced his coming at Ems and the King had decided to receive him (Abeken to Bismarck, 7.45 P.M.).

[6] No. 49.

[7] Bismarck to Abeken, July 9, Tg. of 9 A.M. (No. 59). This disposes of the story hitherto current (which comes from the already cited Andrae reminiscences in the *Kreuzzeitung* of Sept. 5, 1895) that Bismarck then telegraphed to Ems, begging the King to enter into no discussion with Benedetti and, if the latter became pressing, to tell him: "My Minister of Foreign Affairs is in Varzin."

for a few hours, was paying her husband a visit which was probably not without effect upon his attitude in the ensuing interview.

For, in the long audience accorded to Benedetti that afternoon, William did not in several respects comport himself as Bismarck would have desired. He did, indeed, speak "very sternly" about Gramont's declaration; he did staunchly defend the thesis that the Prussian government had had nothing to do with the Hohenzollern Candidacy; and he did refuse Benedetti the chief thing the latter had been sent to demand: a promise to order or advise Leopold to withdraw. But when it came to explaining this refusal, the King's honesty, or his high sense of his own prerogatives, would not permit him to resort to Bismarck's flimsy subterfuges: to excuses that belied the facts or implied that he, the King, had no authority over his relatives. He preferred to state frankly that he had been consulted and had formally approved Leopold's acceptance, and having once given his word, could not now retract it. Moreover, he made other admissions about the history of the candidacy, such as the fact that he had informed Bismarck of "these various incidents," admissions of a sort to arouse joy at Paris and consternation at Varzin. What was still more important, he declared that, while he could not use his authority to induce Leopold to withdraw, he would also do nothing to dissuade him from withdrawing. He admitted that he had put himself in communication with the Sigmaringen princes and had questioned them about their intentions, and he virtually asked Benedetti for a brief adjournment of further discussions until the expected reply could arrive.[8] This request the ambassador felt obliged to grant, in spite of the hot impatience of

[8] For this first audience of Benedetti, we have long had his reports (Tg. of July 9, 8 P.M., and his longer courier despatch and private letter to Gramont of the same evening) in his book, pp. 325–340; and the King's letter to the Queen, of July 10, in Oncken, p. 186. To these sources I can now add the account which Abeken telegraphed to Bismarck on the morning of the 10th (No. 72). This latter account is interesting, not only as adding various details in William's own words, but also because it shows a certain lack of candor toward Bismarck, which is also noticeable in many other reports from Ems at that time (in this case apparent particularly in the way in which the responsibility for Benedetti's remaining at Ems and for the probable continuance of the conversations is thrust upon the ambassador alone).

his government, lest otherwise it should look as if he had been sent to Ems only in order to provoke an immediate rupture.

With this interview the diplomatic situation entered upon a new phase, which lasted down to the 12th of July, and the chief feature of which was the King's attempt to develop, within certain limits, an independent policy of his own and to bring about a peaceful solution of the crisis through the voluntary withdrawal of the Hohenzollerns. The Chancellor's policy was still that which Thile outlined to Rascon, the Spanish envoy at Berlin: "Bismarck will yield in nothing"; to requests for the King's intervention with the Hohenzollerns, "Bismarck will give an evasive answer in order to gain time and carry through the election." [9] William, on the other hand, by his interpellation at Sigmaringen on July 6, which he had never ventured to confess to Bismarck, had begun to pave the way for his own solution. And by disclosures to Benedetti on the 9th, which had also gone further than he had revealed at Varzin, he had brought this solution within the purview of the French government, and had hinted rather clearly at the likelihood of an outcome that would satisfy the essential demands of France without sacrificing the dignity of Prussia. Henceforth it was a battle for time, in the face of the boiling impatience at Paris, the hesitations at Sigmaringen, the contrary suggestions from Varzin, and the fears and suspicions that so frequently arose in the King's own mind.

One means of gaining time was to keep Benedetti amused: hence on the evening of the 9th he, along with Werther, was made to dine with the King and to accompany him to the theatre. The next morning the two ambassadors escorted His Majesty on his *Kurpromenade*. But that Sunday (the 10th) must have been an anxious and gloomy day for William. The nine o'clock mail brought Karl Anton's reply, a thoroughly disappointing document, the gist of which was that the Hohenzollerns would withdraw their candidacy only at the King's express demand.[10] Very bad news had also arrived from Paris. Two telegrams from Solms, the

[9] Rascon's Tgs. to Sagasta of July 8 and 9 (Nos. 237 and 239).

[10] Abeken to Bismarck, Tg. of 10.50 A.M., July 10 (No. 77). Zingeler, pp. 251, 252. William to Augusta, July 10 and 11 (Oncken, pp. 186, 187).

chargé d'affaires, and one from Waldersee, the military attaché, reported that it seemed certain that, if the candidacy were not withdrawn within a few days, a French declaration of war would follow; Gramont had told Olózaga [11] that France would leave Spain entirely out of the matter and direct her attack upon Prussia; in the Ministries of War and Marine comprehensive preparations were already on foot for conducting a great war; and there seemed to be an inclination to strike without waiting for general mobilization.[12] Hitherto William had discountenanced the idea that war was coming.[13] Now, however, we find him writing: "The situation is more than serious. . . . The French ministry, above all Gramont, want war (whether the Emperor, too, I am not certain)." [14]

In the first flush of alarm, the King telegraphed to Varzin to raise the question whether Prussia also ought not to adopt military measures of precaution and whether his own return to Berlin might, perhaps, be necessary.[15] Soon after, orders were sent to the capital that the whole situation should be laid before the Council of Ministers, and that the French armaments should be brought particularly to the attention of Roon (the Minister of War).[16]

But the more imminent the danger of war, the more the King struggled to find some means of averting it. One of the most uniquely interesting documents of those anxious days is the telegram of that afternoon in which William begged Bismarck's advice on two such expedients: was it still possible that he (the King) might write a letter to Napoleon, which Werther could carry back to Paris; or might Prussia, in accordance with the Paris Protocol of 1856, invoke the mediation of the neutral powers to avert the conflict that France was seeking? Apart from the

[11] The Spanish ambassador.

[12] Solms's Tgs. of 2.30 and 3 P.M., July 9 (Nos. 64 and 65), which were probably brought to the King's attention only on the morning of the 10th, and Waldersee's Tg. of 10.40 P.M., July 9 (No. 70).

[13] William to Augusta, July 7 (Oncken, p. 185); Abeken to Bernstorff, July 9 (No. 58).

[14] To Karl Anton, July 10 (Fester, *BA*, No. 399).

[15] Abeken to Bismarck, Tg. of 10.50 A.M., July 10 (No. 77).

[16] Abeken to the Foreign Office, Tg. of 12.10 P.M., July 10 (No. 80).

King's private negotiations with the Hohenzollerns, these were virtually the only suggestions made on the Prussian side during the whole course of the crisis for doing anything to prevent a war; and it need scarcely be said that Bismarck promptly vetoed both proposals.[17]

It was of more consequence that William had already decided, without consulting Bismarck, to make a supreme effort with the Hohenzollerns. Unwilling to trust to letters alone, and having — strangely enough — no cipher with which he could communicate with Sigmaringen, the King now despatched thither a trusted officer, Colonel Strantz, charged with a letter whose implications were fairly clear, and with oral messages that were probably of a nature to remove all doubts as to the royal wishes.[18]

For Bismarck, too, that Sunday was a day of great activity,[19] under the stimulus of the warlike news from Paris. But, unlike his sovereign, all of the Chancellor's energies seemed to be devoted only to getting Germany ready for a conflict and to opposing all suggestions that might help to avert a rupture.

For the first purpose, he redoubled his efforts to arouse public opinion. Apart from the steady flow of "themes" for the newspapers, in which the talented Bucher ran the gamut of vituperation and insinuation against France, the official press was now ordered to get into action.[20] Taking up the King's suggestion of two days before for some kind of declaration to reassure Germany, Bismarck also drafted the first public manifesto that had yet been issued by the Prussian government as to the pending crisis: a communication to the press and to his representatives at the South German capitals in which the outstanding feature was the assertion that in the future, as in the past, Prussia would exercise no influence whatever on Prince Leopold's decisions, and

[17] Abeken to Bismarck, Tg. of 3 P.M., July 10 (No. 82). Bismarck's reply, Tg. of 7.17 P.M. (No. 88).

[18] Strantz left Ems at 3.10 P.M., July 10. He was the same officer who had gone to Spain on what was probably Bismarck's first reconnoissance there, in the autumn of 1868. William's letter to Karl Anton of July 10 is printed by Fester, *BA*, No. 399.

[19] Eleven Tgs. of the 10th from Varzin are printed below — a larger number than for any other day of the crisis.

[20] Bismarck to Thile, Tg., July 10, 11.15 A.M. (No. 79).

that she was precluded from entering into any detailed or confidential explanations with France by the tone in which this question had been publicly discussed by the French ministers.[21] This might be considered Bismarck's reply to the Benedetti mission. On the same day, the Chancellor prepared a confidential circular to the four South German governments, of whose loyalty to their alliance treaties with Prussia of 1866 it was important to make sure, but from whom virtually nothing had hitherto been heard. This note, after pointing to the danger of war and defending the Prussian attitude of perfect abstention, declared that Prussia would arm if France did, that she was confident that a French attack would find Germany united, and that she would like to see the South German governments express themselves in that sense at Paris.[22]

That Bismarck did, indeed, regard the prospects of war as rather serious is shown by his orders that the French railways should now be carefully watched,[23] and that everything relating to the Spanish question should henceforth be communicated to the General Staff,[24] as well as by his suggestion that, while the question of immediately adopting measures of precaution was one to be settled by the military men, still he would think it dangerous to omit for political reasons what was expedient from a military standpoint. For the time being he found it useful that the King should remain at Ems,[25] perhaps summoning Moltke thither.[26] In case of a French attack, he added, "our situation would politically be very advantageous."

But while apparently taking the prospects of war seriously himself, Bismarck was anxious that the King should not do so.

[21] Bismarck to the Foreign Office, Tg., July 10, 8.06 P.M. (No. 89). This statement was communicated to the press by Thile the following day, and appeared in the newspapers on the 12th. The not uninteresting history of the genesis of this manifesto can be traced at length from Nos. 44, 45, 54, 60, 71, 72 and 81.

[22] Bismarck to the Foreign Office, Tg., July 10, 3.30 P.M. (No. 83). Cf. Nos. 102 and 103.

[23] Bismarck to the Foreign Office, Tg., July 9, 6.15 P.M. (No. 68).

[24] Bismarck to Thile, Tg., July 10, 5.10 P.M. (No. 85).

[25] In order not to call attention, by his return, to any military measures that might be adopted at Berlin.

[26] Telegram of Bismarck to Abeken, repeated by Bucher to Thile, July 10, 10 P.M. (No. 92).

Hence those telegrams to Ems in which he minimized the importance of Waldersee's, and denied altogether the value of Solms's, reports, and pressed that Werther be sent back to Paris at once in order to have a competent observer there.[27] The ambassador's return might also have the advantage of removing a too pacific and Francophile adviser from the King's entourage.

The whole situation at Ems must by this time have become a source of grave anxiety to the Chancellor. Although most imperfectly informed as to William's dealings with Sigmaringen and with Benedetti, he did, at least, know that his sovereign had made indiscreet revelations to the ambassador; that further negotiations between them were in prospect; and, above all, that Benedetti, having in some way been led to expect that the Hohenzollerns were going to announce their withdrawal to the King, was staying on in the hope of having this news transmitted to him by the King of Prussia.[28]

As far as the candidacy itself was concerned, one may, I think, say with a fair degree of certainty that Bismarck would much have preferred that it should not be withdrawn. It was true that he could no longer dwell upon its advantages or urge his master to uphold it, for the course of events had justified only too well the fears and repugnance which William had always felt toward the project. But he could and did try to dissuade the King from doing anything to remove this bone of contention. Although William had repeatedly pledged himself not to order Leopold to withdraw,[29] Bismarck still felt it necessary to preach to him on that subject.[30] There remained the danger that the King might privately advise a renunciation, and it is amusing to see the subtlety with which Bismarck approached this problem. Having learned that Karl Anton had declared that his son would not withdraw unless William demanded it, the Chancellor telegraphed that he found it "no pretty trait" in the Hohenzollerns to try to thrust such a decision upon the King; they ought

[27] Bismarck to Abeken, July 10, 11.15 A.M. (No. 78), 5.45 P.M. (No. 87), and about 10 P.M. (No. 92).

[28] So much could be gathered from Abeken's Tg. of July 10, 6 A.M. (No. 72).

[29] Cf. Nos. 36 and 72.

[30] Bismarck to Abeken, July 10, about 10 P.M. (No. 92).

to know enough to make up their minds for themselves; "I recommend not to answer." [31] If communications could be suspended between Ems and Sigmaringen, Bismarck doubtless would have felt safer. Before this advice had been received, William had already sent Colonel Strantz to Karl Anton, but two days more were to pass before the Chancellor learned of it.

At all events, the voluntary withdrawal of the Hohenzollerns was a possibility always to be reckoned with. In that case, as Bismarck with unerring instinct anticipated, the French would attach the greatest importance to having the renunciation announced to them by a communication from the King of Prussia to Benedetti. For the world would then be likely to conclude that the King was the real author of the withdrawal, that he had imposed it upon his relatives; and the inference might also be drawn that, in announcing this decision of the Prince to the French government, he was in some sense giving it his approval and guarantee. All this would mean that France would have succeeded in both her aims: in securing the defeat of the candidacy and in obtaining some kind of formal satisfaction for the alleged misdeeds of the Prussian government in the past. All this would be contrary to two great principles which Bismarck had steadily been fighting for: first, that the King of Prussia and his government should not appear to exercise any influence over Leopold's decisions in regard to the Spanish crown; and, secondly, that the King and his government should do nothing that might be interpreted as a surrender or even a concession to France. In order to prevent such a disaster, Bismarck on the afternoon of the 10th telegraphed to Ems an urgent plea that "no declarations of the Prince addressed to France or Spain should be transmitted through the King or through the royal embassies." [32]

[31] No. 92. This telegram is, I think, without doubt, the Bismarckian utterance which the King refers to in his letter to Augusta of July 11 (Oncken, p. 189). This latter passage has been quoted an endless number of times as proof that, by the 11th, Bismarck was ready to sacrifice the candidacy. Placed alongside Bismarck's real utterance, it — clearly — proves nothing of the sort. It is to be observed that the King, who was frequently not very exact in his statements, did not reproduce the Chancellor's language very well, and had either failed to grasp, or did not care to transmit to the Queen, the real drift of Bismarck's advice.

[32] Bismarck to Abeken and to the Foreign Office, Tg. of 3.35 P.M. (No. 84).

But telegrams were no longer sufficient. His presence on the scene of action was now required. Obviously the supreme moment was close at hand. If the Hohenzollerns should stand firm for a few days still, a French ultimatum or a declaration of war was to be anticipated. If the Hohenzollerns should yield — it is difficult to say how far Bismarck had yet thought out his plans for that contingency, but one may be sure that he did not contemplate merely a tame acceptance of defeat. Moreover, there was the immediate duty of taking over the negotiations with Benedetti into his own more competent hands. Hence, on this same afternoon he telegraphed to Abeken: "If H.M. the King should desire my presence at Ems, my condition would permit me to go." [33] The following morning brought William's prompt assent, and the request to come as quickly as possible.[34]

Meanwhile, late on that Sunday night, Benedetti, driven on by urgent orders from Paris, had seized the opportunity of a chance meeting with the King to beg for a new audience. Though painfully conscious that he had nothing new to say, in view of the disappointing letter received from Karl Anton that morning, William agreed, in order to keep the negotiations going until the Strantz mission could produce its result.[35]

The news and the occupations of the next morning were not of a sort to tranquillize the anxious mind of the King. A telegram from Strantz announced that he had been held back for twelve hours by missing a railway connection, and could reach his destination only that night.[36] While this implied a further vexatious delay at Sigmaringen, the need of the utmost haste

[33] Tg. of 5.28 P.M. (No. 86).

[34] Bismarck's Tg. reached Ems at 7.40 P.M., at 10.30 the King expressed his approval, and at 5.30 A.M., July 11, Abeken sent the news to Bismarck (No. 101). This disproves Fester's conjecture that Bismarck already on the 9th had asked permission to come, and that the King hesitated twenty-four hours before granting it (*ED*, p. 111).

[35] Through Werther the King had kept in some touch with Benedetti that day, letting him know that an inconclusive reply had been received from Karl Anton; and through the same channel the ambassador had prepared the King for his request for a new interview. See his Tgs. of 8 P.M. and 11.30 P.M., Benedetti, pp. 343–345.

[36] Cf. Abeken to Karl Anton, Tg., July 11, 9.10 A.M. (Fester, *BA*, No. 419, and accompanying note).

was emphasized by a new batch of alarming reports from Paris.[37] "God grant that the Hohenzollerns may have an insight!" was William's reaction on this news.[38] That morning he also conferred with General Herwarth von Bittenfeld, commander of the Eighth Army Corps (Koblenz), and Prince Waldemar of Holstein, governor of the fortress of Mainz, and telegraphed orders to Berlin that the Ministry of War should at once submit detailed proposals as to the military measures that ought to be taken to guard the Rhinelands against a French attack.[39] Thereupon, about noon he received in audience the French ambassador.

In this second interview, which lasted an hour, the King's patience and the elaborate courtesy hitherto maintained on both sides were put to a severe strain. Benedetti scarcely minced his language in exposing the set of incredible assumptions on which the Prussian official attitude was based; and in the face of the King's pleas for a little more time, in which to obtain the final answer of the Hohenzollerns, pressed, "with all imaginable arguments," to be authorized to telegraph immediately to Paris that the King would induce Leopold to withdraw. Once William was goaded to the point of declaring that he was not ignorant of the military preparations that were going on in France, and that he himself was taking his precautions in order not to be caught by surprise. Finally, Benedetti had to content himself with the King's assurance that he expected to learn Leopold's decision within twenty-four hours and would then inform him (Benedetti) of it. At bottom, the ambassador now understood the King's plan fairly well — that the onus of making the renunciation was to be thrust upon Leopold, but that William might announce the accomplished fact, with some expression of his approval — and this probable outcome was clearly foreshadowed in his reports of that day to Paris.[40]

[37] See Nos. 96–99.

[38] William to Augusta, July 11 and 12, Oncken, pp. 188–190.

[39] Abeken to the Foreign Office (Treskow to Roon), Tg., July 11, 9.25 A.M. (No. 104).

[40] On Benedetti's audience of the 11th: Abeken to the Foreign Office for Bismarck, Tg., July 11, 2 P.M. (No. 111); William to Augusta, July 11, Oncken, pp. 187, 188; Benedetti's Tgs. of 1.30 P.M., 2.30 P.M. and 5 P.M., July 11, and his

As another means of restraining French impatience and gaining time, the King was doubtless glad to follow out Bismarck's repeated suggestions of the preceding day by despatching Werther that evening back to his official post.[41] The ambassador could not carry with him a friendly letter to Napoleon, such as William had proposed and Bismarck had vetoed; but he was undoubtedly charged to seek an immediate interview with Gramont, and even with the Emperor himself, in order to explain the King's point of view and prevent any precipitate action.[42]

While at Ems on July 11 a distracted King was thus making every effort to maintain peace, at Berlin, Varzin, and Paris, on the contrary, all thoughts seemed to be turned toward an impending rupture.

Thile, who for a week had done nothing except to hold languid conferences with foreign diplomats, in which he would say only that Prussia had had nothing to do with the candidacy and could do nothing about it, was now sure that war was close at hand.[43] On that Monday afternoon, in accordance with the King's orders of the previous day, the Council of Ministers held a meeting, which was also attended by representatives of the General Staff,[44]

long report of that day, in his book, pp. 349–359. Here, as always, the accounts which William transmitted to Bismarck through Abeken make the King out to have been more firm and intransigent than Benedetti's reports would indicate.

[41] In view of Fester's various conjectures about the time and motives of this decision (*ED*, pp. 114, 115, 117–119), it may be pointed out that Werther's speedy return to Paris had already been decided upon by the morning of the 10th (cf. No. 77), but was further hastened by Bismarck's urging and by the interview with Benedetti. (Cf. No. 111; also William to Augusta, July 12, Oncken, pp. 188, 189.)

[42] Cf. William to Augusta, July 12, and Benedetti's Tgs. to Gramont of July 11, 2.30 and 5 P.M. No written instruction to Werther is to be found in the archives of the Berlin Foreign Office, and as far as was reported to Bismarck, the ambassador received no instructions beyond what the Chancellor had outlined on the 5th (Nos. 37, 77, and 87); but in this case, too, Bismarck does not seem to have been treated by the King with perfect candor.

[43] Münch to Beust, July 9 (No. 238) and July 11; De Launay to Visconti-Venosta, July 11, cited in Nigra, "Ricordi diplomatici," *Nuova Antologia*, cxl (1895), p. 8.

[44] This meeting, which lasted three hours according to Loftus (July 12, *British Blue Book*, No. 51), was attended (according to the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of July 13) by the ministers Thile, Roon, Eulenburg, Itzenplitz (Commerce), and Leonhardt (Justice), and by General von Podbielski (Roon's chief assistant) and Colonel von Stiehle (representing the absent Moltke).

for the purpose of considering the general situation and the question of immediately adopting military measures of defense. The outcome of the discussion was unfavorable to any special measures, which would only call forth similar ones on the French side and lead directly to war. If the King was convinced that war was inevitable, the only proper course would be to order the complete mobilization of the army. On the political side, the ministers could suggest nothing except a threat to convoke the North German Reichstag, which might have a chastening effect on France. Apparently in ignorance of Bismarck's proposed trip to Ems, the council seems also to have discussed sending either Roon or Eulenburg, the Minister of the Interior, to lay its views in more detail before the King.[45]

For Bismarck, who had on the 11th received his permission to come to Ems too late to start before the following morning,[46] that Monday was a quiet day, though probably it was one of serious and thoughtful preparation for the battle into which he was about to plunge. As far as one can penetrate into his plans and expectations on the eve of that momentous journey, they can, perhaps, be summarized as follows.

In the first place, he was still for upholding the candidacy and for linking the cause of Spain to that of Prussia. Significant in this respect is the curious telegram which he sent to Thile on the morning of the 12th, just before leaving Varzin, in which he suggested that in the present situation Leopold could decently maintain his candidacy only on the condition that, if Germany were attacked by France because of this affair, Spain would at once declare and begin war. Therefore Thile was directed to

[45] Roon to King William, Tg., July 11, 5.10 P.M. (No. 116). As to the idea of sending Eulenburg (in case the visit of the War Minister were found "too demonstrative"), cf. Loftus' report of July 12 (*British Blue Book*, No. 51); also Münch to Beust (private letter), July 11. This meeting of the Council of Ministers has received almost no attention from historians, except from Sybel, and he speaks only of a quite informal evening gathering of the ministers who happened to be in Berlin, at which "military measures were not even mentioned" (vii, p. 219).

One further result of the meeting was probably the sending of the telegram that recalled Moltke to Berlin (v. Fester, *ED*, p. 234, as to the time of it), a step which only the day before had not been thought necessary (No. 93).

[46] Keudell to Abeken, Tg. of 12.40 P.M. (No. 107).

publish through indirect channels the statement that the Prince had already declared himself, or was about to declare himself, in this sense.[47] A rigorist might cavil at the veracity of this statement, but, no doubt, that tale might help both to save the reputation of the Prince, and to remind the Spaniards of their duties, and to reconcile the German people to the war which they were apparently doomed to fight on behalf of this princeling. On the same day Thile, acting — doubtless — upon orders from Varzin, confidentially informed Rascon that Bismarck was about to address an inquiry to the Spanish government as to what it would do in case France declared war on Prussia but not upon Spain.[48]

How far the Chancellor's thoughts had advanced on the subject of war is further shown by his last recorded act before leaving Varzin: the sending of a telegram to his envoy at Washington to inquire whether in case of war the government of the United States would adopt a benevolent attitude toward German efforts to secure "the means of maritime defense" from America.[49]

That Bismarck was not inclined to raise a hand to prevent a breach, is well illustrated by two incidents of July 11. Thile that afternoon had reported some remarks ascribed to Le Sourd, which seemed to mean that the French government was about to withdraw its ambassador from Ems and its chargé from Berlin, in order to bring about "a factual rupture of diplomatic relations." Bismarck replied merely: "I have received No. 20. Contents perfectly indifferent. Let events take their course."[50] One is tempted to conjecture that this episode supplies the clue to an-

[47] Tg. of 8.28 A.M. (No. 127). Thile entrusted the dissemination of this fable to the influential Bleichröder, as Bismarck had suggested; and the story was duly published in various newspapers — e.g., in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of July 15, as a Frankfort despatch of the 13th, and in the *Börsen-Courier* of the 12th (evening) under a Düsseldorf heading.

[48] Rascon to Sagasta, Tg., July 12, 2.15 P.M. (No. 241). I could not find any orders from Bismarck to Thile about this matter.

[49] Bismarck to Thile for Baron v. Gerold, Tg., July 12, 9.45 A.M. (No. 129). The reply, received on the 14th, was that our government would allow both belligerents the right to obtain maritime supplies here, without, however, violating the laws of neutrality (No. 191).

[50] Thile to Bucher, Abeken, and Solms, Tg., July 11, 1.45 P.M. (No. 110). Bismarck to Thile, Tg., July 11, 6 P.M. (No. 117).

other act of his, which has long been known but has never been explained. While on the 10th he had, as we have seen, insisted upon Werther's immediate return to Paris, on the evening of the 11th he suddenly turned about and telegraphed to Ems to prevent the ambassador's departure. Werther had taken the train an hour before this message arrived, and the King was unwilling to recall him; but it looks very much as if Bismarck, hearing that the French were planning a factual rupture of relations, was willing to help them to the best of his ability.[51]

What general plan of campaign the Chancellor intended to adopt after reaching Ems cannot be stated with certainty. Did he mean to send Benedetti flying? Quite clearly he meant to propose to the King the convocation of the Reichstag.[52] Did he also mean to demand the mobilization of the army, as he has stated in his memoirs? [53] That seems probable, but one cannot be quite sure that he is not confusing here the plans that he had on leaving Varzin that morning with those that were formed only after receiving the great news that reached him at Berlin that evening.

At any rate, it was with his blood up and in no pacific mood that Bismarck rode forth that morning, "uncommonly silent, but looking cheerful," [54] with Keudell beside him in the open carriage. He later liked to recall that as they drove through the village of Wussow, he saw his old friend, the pastor Mulert, standing before his door and greeting him, whereupon he (Bismarck) answered only by making a great heave in the air "in quarte and tierce," as if with an invisible sword, and the pastor understood "that I believed I was going into war." [55]

[51] The telegram to detain Werther at Ems is reported in the *Life of Abeken*, pp. 249, 250. I did not find a copy of this in the Berlin archives, but that such a telegram was sent is shown (in spite of Fester's doubts on the subject, *ED*, pp. 117, 118) by Abeken's reply of 8.10 P.M. (No. 120).

[52] *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii, p. 84. This idea of convoking the Reichstag had been maturing in his mind for several days. Cf. his first tentative suggestion about it to the King on July 9 (No. 71); his allusions to this coming event in the themes sent from Varzin for the press, July 10 (Busch, i, p. 38), and in the circular to the South German courts, July 10 (No. 83); his Tg. to Delbrück of July 11, 7 P.M. (No. 118).

[53] *Gedanken und Erinnerungen, loc. cit.* [54] Keudell, p. 441.

[55] *Gedanken und Erinnerungen, loc. cit.;* Busch, i, p. 546.

At Paris, too, by this time the war spirit was becoming almost uncontrollable. For days the Emperor and his ministers had vacillated, torn between their fundamental aversion to war, on the one hand, and, on the other side, their doubts whether the public would tolerate a peaceful solution and whether this was not the best opportunity that was ever likely to present itself for a final reckoning with Prussia. The events of Monday, the 11th, at Paris have never yet been studied as fully as they deserve, but it is clear that the situation was perilously near the breaking-point. That afternoon in the Corps Législatif Gramont had had the greatest difficulty in inducing a bellicose chamber to accord the government a further brief delay before announcing the results of its negotiations with Prussia. That evening warlike feeling seemed to have gained the upper hand. The Austrian ambassador and military attaché, who were at St.-Cloud until late that night, reported that the Emperor had decided to order mobilization the next day, unless by that time a perfectly satisfactory answer had been received from Ems.[56]

But in the small hours of that same night another decision was being made at Sigmaringen, which on the following day was to be the sensation of Europe and was to change the whole situation.

[56] Metternich to Beust, from St.-Cloud, Tg., July 11, 11 P.M. (No. 6886): "L'Empereur essayera d'un nouveau moyen. Il décrétera demain, mardi, la mobilisation au premier degré sans changer l'état de la question [without raising other questions apart from the candidacy] et croit que cela rendra la guerre inévitable." Count Uexküll to the A. H. War Minister, Tg. July 12, 2.30 A.M. (No. 79): "Kaiser verfügt morgen früh, Dienstag, den Beginn der Mobilmachung. . . . Man will hier absolut den Krieg. . . . Ich komme von St.-Cloud und sprach dem Kaiser nachdem eben der Entschluss zur Mobilmachung gefasst war." Metternich to Beust, Tg., July 12, 3 P.M. (No. 7303): "Á moins de réponse péremptoire d'Ems avant 3 heures, Duc de Gramont annoncera à la Chambre la mobilisation." (*V.A.*, ix, 90. *France, Rapports*, 1870.)

CHAPTER V

THE RENUNCIATION. JULY 12

THROUGH eight anxious days the peace of Europe had hung largely upon the resolutions of an elderly gentleman at Sigmaringen and of his son, who had, most unaccountably, got lost somewhere in the Austrian Alps. Leopold's exact whereabouts during that period and the apparent inability of even his own family to get into communication with him have never been satisfactorily explained.[1] His father was, indeed, both able and willing to make a decision for him. But he was long deterred from doing so by scruples about loyalty to a pledge once given to the Spanish government, and by a feeling that it would be dishonorable for a Hohenzollern and a Prussian officer to yield before the menaces of France.

Meanwhile, half the courts and diplomats of Europe had simultaneously discovered that the voluntary withdrawal of the candidate would offer the one means of avoiding war between France and Prussia without compromising the dignity of either power. The Spanish government, after at first concluding that the national honor required it to go on with the candidacy, had by the 10th decided to send a special envoy to Sigmaringen to beg Leopold to retract his acceptance.[2] The King of Belgium, at Na-

[1] What little is known on the subject is due mainly to the industrious researches of Fester, and can be found in his two books, *ED*, pp. 82, 83, 231, 232, and *BA*, Nos. 398, 501, 528, 562. See also Zingeler, *Deutsche Revue* (1914), xxxix,[1] p. 117. It appears that Leopold had started on an Alpine excursion at the beginning of July, learned of the crisis only on the 13th, and got back to Sigmaringen only on the 15th.

[2] This envoy, General Lopez Dominguez, was sent too late to have any influence on the course of events. Admiral Polo de Bernabé had been despatched to Sigmaringen about the 7th, to inform the Hohenzollerns of the decision of the Spanish government to go on with the candidacy in spite of French opposition (cf. the letter from Prim which he carried, No. 258 below). That Prim was not a willing and malicious tool of Bismarck, as Ollivier has represented him, is attested by Olózaga's report from Paris, July 15 (No. 314, *M.A.*), in which he says: "Las comunicaciones particulares del Sr. Presidente del Consejo de Ministros no me dejaban duda alguna de que si hubiera previsto el efecto que en Francia iba á producir semejante candidatura, no la hubiera propuesto jamás."

poleon's request,[3] and Queen Victoria,[4] also, had written to the Hohenzollerns to urge a renunciation. But probably the greatest effect was produced by the mission to Sigmaringen undertaken by Strat, the Roumanian agent at Paris, at the instigation of the Spanish ambassador Olózaga and with the secret connivance of Napoleon. As an observer fully informed as to the situation at Paris and as a trusted servant of the family, who was much concerned over the consequences that French hostility might have for the rather shaky throne of Prince Charles, Strat appears to have had a very important share in Karl Anton's decision.[5] But the romantic stories which Ollivier has woven around this mission (Strat, leaving Paris on the 8th, is made to spend three days at Sigmaringen in furious, exhausting verbal combats, before the victory is won), will have to be discarded.[6] The Roumanian envoy appears to have reached Sigmaringen only on the evening of the 11th, and it was, perhaps, only after the arrival of the belated Colonel Strantz with King William's message, shortly after midnight, that Karl Anton's decision was finally made.[7]

As to the procedure to be adopted in announcing the withdrawal of the candidacy, Strantz was doubtless equipped with all

[3] Cf. his letter to Leopold of July 9, Zingeler, p. 254.

[4] Lord Newton, *Life of Lord Lyons*, i, p. 297. Sidney Lee, *Queen Victoria*, p. 411, speaks also of private letters which the Queen wrote to both Napoleon and King William in the interests of peace.

[5] The best proof of this is to be found in Karl Anton's own statements: cf. *Aus dem Leben König Karls*, ii, pp. 100, 101, 112, 113.

[6] Ollivier's whole account (xiv, pp. 138–141, 206–210), both of Strat's mysterious adventures with Olózaga and Napoleon (at 2 A.M.!) before leaving Paris, and of his exploits at Sigmaringen, has a decidedly fabulous air, though it purports to be based on Strat's own testimony.

[7] The chronology of the Strat mission has always hitherto been an enigma. On the basis of Solms's despatch of July 10 (No. 98), it can now be set down as fairly certain that Strat left Paris only on that late day, presumably by the express at 8.35 A.M. In that case, he could have reached Mengen, the last railway station, only at 5.30 P.M. on the 11th, and there was still a carriage drive of one hour to Sigmaringen. Colonel Strantz arrived about 1 A.M. on the 12th (Fester, *BA*, No. 448). While Ollivier maintained that the credit for obtaining the renunciation belonged solely to Strat, I have followed Fester (*ED*, pp. 91–96) in holding that Karl Anton's last scruples did not vanish until he learned the King's wishes through Strantz.

the necessary suggestions.[8] The communication was to be addressed to the Spanish government, but a duplicate was to be sent to the Spanish ambassador at Paris, in order that the news might come as quickly as possible to the knowledge of the French cabinet. As for the motive to be publicly advanced for the renunciation, Strat had brought a suggestion of Olózaga's which could scarcely be improved upon: it should be said, namely, that under the present circumstances an election could not have the sincerity and spontaneity that were desirable, because (in view of the attitude of France) the Spanish people could vote only in the one way that national honor and dignity required.[9] Hence, after a sleepless night of consultations, came a busy morning devoted to the redaction of the necessary documents. At 10.35 A.M. Karl Anton despatched to Prim the telegram in which he withdrew, in Leopold's name, the previous acceptance of the candidacy. A similar telegram was addressed to Olózaga.[10] A communication was also prepared for the press, which in the course of the afternoon and evening brought the great news to all the capitals of Europe.[11] Finally, the decision was announced to King William by brief telegrams from Strantz and Karl Anton, the latter adding that Strantz would arrive in Ems the follow-

[8] This is, in itself, probable; and besides, there is evidence that the King anticipated the procedure that was actually followed: see his letter to Augusta of July 12 (Oncken, p. 190); and cf. Nos. 90, 119, 132, and 141.

[9] Olózaga was extremely proud of having invented this argument, and boasted that without it the Hohenzollerns could never have been persuaded to withdraw (Report to Sagasta, July 15, *M.A.*).

[10] The telegram to Prim is printed below as No. 259. That to Olózaga is printed by Gramont, pp. 111, 112 (sent 10.28 A.M., reached Paris — according to Ollivier, xiv, p. 211 — at 1.40 P.M.). The hours of the sending and reception of the telegram to Prim, which are here given for the first time, are not without interest. As this telegram reached Madrid only at 6.55 P.M., it could not have been transmitted back to Paris by 5 P.M., as Ollivier declares (xiv, p. 211); and as it was sent from Sigmaringen later than the telegram to Olózaga, it could scarcely have been intercepted at Paris before the telegram to Olózaga arrived there — and thus Fester's argument (*ED*, p. 127) that Gramont knew of the renunciation before he sent his important despatch of 1.40 P.M., would no longer seem quite tenable.

[11] The brief statement given to the press is printed by Zingeler, p. 258. Fester (*ED*, p. 233) shows that at least two very different versions of the affair came to be circulated in the newspapers.

ing day, with a letter from the Prince and full details as to all that had occurred.[12]

William's first joyful outburst on learning of the success of his plan has often been quoted. "A stone has been lifted from my heart!" he wrote to the Queen. "But," he quickly added, "be silent about this toward everyone, in order that the news may not come first from us." [13] There was, indeed, one rock that remained to be safely circumnavigated. In accordance with his promise of the preceding day, the King was bound to confer with Benedetti once more, in order to report the final decision of the Hohenzollerns. That task was delicate, for it required that he should say just enough to satisfy the ambassador and amicably close their negotiations, while at the same time avoiding everything that might be taken to imply that he, as King of Prussia, had had anything to do with procuring the renunciation, or assumed any responsibility for it. Bismarck had vainly urged against making any communications to Benedetti — so far the King was not willing to go; [14] but William had made up his mind not to receive the ambassador officially until after he had conferred with Bismarck, on the latter's expected arrival the next morning, and until after he was sure that Benedetti had already learned of the withdrawal through other channels. Then his (the King's) rôle could be confined to confirming the authenticity of the news, and, perhaps, adding a word as to his approval of his cousin's spontaneous decision.[15] Hence, when on the afternoon of the 12th Benedetti was again William's guest at dinner, he was told only that he would have to wait one day more, as the King had now learned that the answer from Sigmaringen would reach him on the following morning.[16] The ambassador readily

[12] Strantz's Tg. is reported by Abeken's Tg. to the Foreign Office of 12.40 P.M. (No. 132), and Karl Anton's is repeated in Abeken's Tg. to Bismarck of 6.50 P.M. (No. 141).

[13] William to Augusta, July 12, Oncken, p. 190.

[14] Cf. Bismarck's Tg. of July 10, 3.35 P.M. (No. 84), and the King's rejoinder, quoted in Abeken's reply, July 11, 8.10 P.M. (No. 119): "Nach Madrid muss der Erbprinz direct sich aussprechen, *erzählen* kann man hier an Graf Benedetti was geschehen ist."

[15] Abeken's Tgs. to Bismarck of July 12, 12.40 and 6.50 P.M. (Nos. 132 and 141).

[16] Benedetti to Gramont, Tg. July 12, 6 P.M. (Benedetti, p. 365).

assented to this delay, anticipating for the morrow a diplomatic triumph, when the news of the expected renunciation would be officially brought to the knowledge of the French government by a formal communication from the King of Prussia. And so, with both sides looking forward to a happy dénouement, each after his own fashion, this day of truce at Ems would have drawn to a serene close, had not the evening brought an avalanche of anxious telegrams from Berlin.

Bismarck, after a weary all-day journey, had reached the capital about five o'clock,[17] intending to stay over a few hours and take the night train for Ems. As he drove across the city, at the corner of the Linden and the Wilhelmstrasse his carriage encountered that of Prince Gorchakov, the Russian Chancellor, who had just arrived on a vacation trip to the west; and the two great statesmen stopped to shake hands.[18] But as Bismarck entered his residence, a secretary met him with a mass of accumulated telegrams, which were to cause him one of the worst surprises of his life. In his memoirs he has described his tragic feelings and resolutions on that occasion in a passage which no reader will forget, but which has proved neither clear nor convincing to historians.[19] In view of that fact and of the importance of this moment in the crisis, it seems necessary to take up in some detail the events of that memorable evening.

In the first place, we can now ascertain what were the more important documents that confronted Bismarck upon his arrival. There was, above all, Abeken's telegram of 12.40 P.M.,[20]

[17] It has been agreed (by Fester, Riess, and others) that Bismarck took the train at Schlawe that morning at 11.01 A.M. and arrived in Berlin, at 6 P.M. That would seem to be borne out by Bradshaw's *Railway Guide* for June, 1870, which gives the same hours and shows that this was the only regular train that he could have taken. On the other hand, the first Tg. which he sent after reaching Berlin was despatched at 5.50 P.M., and allowing for the time necessary for coding this Tg. and the time necessary for driving from the Stettiner Bahnhof to the Wilhelmstrasse, one would have to place his arrival about 5. Could he have had a special train that day — for at least part of the way? Or was the regular train then running an hour earlier than according to the June time-table?

[18] Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, *Aus meinem Leben*, iv, p. 6.

[19] *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii, pp. 84–87.

[20] No. 132.

which briefly announced Leopold's renunciation. From this and from an Ems telegram of the previous evening,[21] the Chancellor also learned for the first time [22] that the King had written to Karl Anton again, contrary to his advice; that he had even sent a special envoy (Strantz) to Sigmaringen, thus probably directly provoking the renunciation; that he meant, despite Bismarck's advice, to report the decision of the Hohenzollerns to Benedetti; and that, apparently, even if Bismarck came to Ems, William meant to continue his personal dealings with the French ambassador. Apart from this, there were numerous despatches from Paris full of warlike rumors, blusterings of Gramont, and newspaper rodomontades that must have made the Chancellor's blood boil.[23]

Although not entirely unexpected, the renunciation was, without doubt, a terrible blow to Bismarck.[24] He had worked with all his strength for the Hohenzollern Candidacy, at least for five months, perhaps for much longer; he had attached high

[21] No. 119, which, reaching Berlin only at 11.55 P.M. on July 11, was, pretty certainly, not sent on to Varzin before Bismarck's departure.

[22] This is on the assumption that No. 100 was never sent. See the footnote attached to it.

[23] Nos. 96–99, 112, 114, and 130. In his memoirs Bismarck, referring to the despatches that so excited him upon his arrival, mentions only those that showed how, in spite of French threats and insults, the King continued to negotiate with Benedetti, instead of coldly referring the ambassador to his ministers. He will admit that he learned of the renunciation only later, during supper, through a telegram from Paris. Was this misstatement due to failing memory? Or was he, still faithful to the fictions he defended in 1870, even yet trying to pretend that the Prussian government had no direct channels of its own to Sigmaringen but got its news from there by way of Paris?

[24] It is true that, after the first shock was over, Bismarck did declare in a Tg. to Abeken (7.20 P.M., No. 143) that "the Prince's decision is certainly right and I had expected it." But in a Tg. to be laid before the King he could hardly have taken up any other attitude. Illuminating as to his first reaction on the news are his marginal notes scrawled over No. 119, from which, it may be presumed, he got his first notions as to the genesis of the renunciation (the Strantz mission, etc.). That riot of queries and interrogation points about matters the sense of which must have been perfectly clear to him, can be ascribed, I think, only to anger and sarcasm. Moreover, the evidence to be found in his memoirs and numerous other later utterances (which can be found conveniently brought together in Pahncke, *Parallel-Erzählungen Bismarcks zu seinen Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, pp. 162–166) seems to be overwhelming in favor of the view advanced in the text.

hopes to it; he had held to it down to the last. To sacrifice the project now, in the face of French threats of war, after Gramont's declaration and all the vaunts and taunts in the Paris newspapers, — "la Prusse cane," etc. — was that not an unparalleled disgrace, a second Olmütz far worse than the first?

But amid all his disappointment and anger Bismarck's mind turned at once to the most immediate danger. He still had no knowledge of how the renunciation was to be announced to the world, and he was obviously much afraid that it might be through William's intended interview with Benedetti. To prevent that, and for other purposes as yet, perhaps, not clearly fixed, his first thought was to go on to Ems as he had originally planned. His first telegram to Abeken, sent at 5.50 P.M., announced his coming, and contained an earnest plea that no declaration be given to Benedetti before his arrival.[25] In this intention he continued for about an hour.[26]

Meanwhile Roon and Eulenburg, the two ministers whom the council on the preceding day had talked of sending to Ems, came to discuss the situation. The conversation, which may have lasted about an hour,[27] must have been lugubrious enough, if we may trust the Chancellor's account, which at this point does seem to fit into the circumstances admirably. Bismarck declared that they had tamely submitted to a blow in the face from France, and from one concession to another had been forced into a situation where they could not wipe out the stain on their honor without going to war, and yet could not have war without seeming deliberately to provoke it. As he could not champion a peaceful policy under these circumstances, his position in office had become untenable; and it had become so because of the King's attempt to conduct affairs of state by himself, without the aid of his ministers.[28]

[25] No. 139. [26] Cf. Keudell's Tg. to the Crown Prince, of 6.45 P.M. (No. 140).

[27] It was over, apparently, by the time the Tg. sent at 7.20 was drafted.

[28] Bismarck (*Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii, pp. 84–86) seems to imply that he said all this to Roon only at the ensuing supper-party, where, as he affirms, he first learned of the renunciation and the sending of Eulenburg to Ems was decided upon. But as he really got this news and also resolved upon Eulenburg's mission before the supper, I am inclined to transfer those remarks back to, or to hold that he probably said very similar things at, his conference with Eulenburg and Roon.

Whether Bismarck at this time regarded the situation as so hopeless that he had made up his mind to resign, is a question that has aroused a great deal of discussion. He himself later on constantly affirmed it, though his language varied as to how far he had gone in giving effect to this decision. In his memoirs he says only that he had *resolved* to announce his resignation at Ems, as soon as he learned of the renunciation, because he now regarded peace as assured.[29] Elsewhere, however, he is quoted as saying that he actually did telegraph his resignation to the King,[30] though it is often added that there was a condition attached: he would resign if William granted any more audiences to Benedetti,[31] or if the King did not decide to go to war.[32] Now that his despatches of that evening to Ems are at hand, it can be affirmed with fair certainty that no such telegram was sent. But was he at least resolved in his own mind to resign?

In approaching that problem, one point, at least, is clear. By this time Bismarck was heart and soul in favor of war. Whether in taking up the Hohenzollern Candidacy he had from the first hoped to use it as a trap to lure Napoleon into war, is a question on which we have not sufficient evidence, and, perhaps, never shall have. That in pursuing that candidacy he had always recognized that it might lead to serious consequences, but had left it to time and circumstances to decide what kind of an outcome he would seek, is another quite tenable hypothesis. That since the beginning of the crisis in July he had maintained a perfectly intransigent attitude, which, but for the action of the King and the Hohenzollerns, would have made war inevitable, can scarcely be denied, although his aims during the earlier period of the crisis

[29] *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii, pp. 84, 85.

[30] Busch, *Tagebuchblätter*, ii, p. 485, iii, p. 244 (Oct. 20, 1877, and Sept. 26, 1888); Poschinger, *Bismarck und die Parlamentarier*, iii, pp. 128–130 (the interview published in the *Neue Freie Presse*, Nov. 20, 1892); Hahn, *Fürst Bismarck*, v, pp. 570, 571 (the well-known *Immediatbericht* of Sept. 23, 1888, to William II as to the diary of Frederick III); Hofmann, *Fürst Bismarck, 1890–98*, i, p. 177.

[31] Busch (Oct. 20, 1877), where it is said that Bismarck first telegraphed that he would resign if the King received Benedetti once more, and, receiving no answer, telegraphed a second time that, if the King had now received Benedetti, he (Bismarck) would consider his resignation as accepted.

[32] Hofmann, *loc. cit.*

are not so clear. But what is certain is the fact that, from the evening of July 12 on, he was unwilling to accept any other outcome than war. Of that fact he boasted for the rest of his life, and scarcely anyone has ventured to disbelieve him.

But it may well be doubted whether at that time Bismarck was quite so certain as he later affirmed that peace was now assured. He was sufficiently informed of the chauvinism and bellicosity that were running riot in a large section of the French public. He had just read in Solms's despatch that the French government was bent upon obtaining either a diplomatic victory or war, and would perhaps prefer the latter to the former.[33] Was it so clear, then, that the French would content themselves with the renunciation of the Hohenzollerns and would raise no new demands? A little later in the evening, apropos of a remark of Lord Granville's that under certain circumstances war was inevitable, Bismarck wrote: "How can he tell? Napoleon himself does not know." [34]

But even if the French should prove disappointingly pacific, there were still means of bringing on a conflict. By convoking the Reichstag, for instance, and staging some great demonstration of 'public opinion,' like the outburst during the Luxemburg crisis of 1867. Or, more directly, by demanding explanations from France regarding Gramont's threats of July 6 or the French military preparations. The Bismarck who, before his breach with Austria, used to amuse French diplomats by enumerating all the pretexts for war that he could trump up whenever they were required,[35] must have trusted himself now to conjure up a war, if only the King would assent to his wishes.

The real difficulty was at Ems; and what between his knowledge of William's strong desire for peace, and his vexation over the negotiations with Benedetti, and his suspicions as to the King's dealings with Sigmaringen, one may well believe Bismarck's reiterated statements that he thought very seriously of resigning and going back to sullen retirement at Varzin.[36] But

[33] No. 96. [34] V. No. 137.

[35] Cf. Lefebvre de Béhaine's report of Sept. 12, 1865, in *Les Origines diplomatiques de la guerre de 1870–71*, vii, pp. 57–59.

[36] He must, pretty certainly, have telegraphed to Varzin that night that he

this he would not do until he had first made a supreme attempt to bring the King around by using that threat of resignation which had so often proved effective.

This rather long digression has seemed necessary in order to explain the outcome of the discussion between Bismarck, Roon, and Eulenburg. The first result of that conference was the sending of two telegrams, one addressed to Abeken, the other to the King. Both despatches show that Bismarck's most immediate preoccupation was still the fear that the renunciation was first to be announced to the world through a communication by the King to Benedetti. Hence the telegram to Abeken contained an impassioned argument against any such procedure; while in the telegram addressed to the King all three ministers joined in the urgent entreaty to make no declaration of any sort to the French ambassador, but to tell him merely that Leopold would announce his decision to the Spanish government.[37]

The second and most important result of the conference was the decision that Bismarck should remain at Berlin, and that Eulenburg should go to Ems in his place. The excuse sent to the King was that the Chancellor was too much worn out by the journey from Varzin to be able to stand the further trip.[38] Eulenburg might, at any rate, make a very tolerable substitute, for he possessed both Bismarck's and William's confidence and exercised great influence over the King.

No written instructions or other documents given to the envoy have so far been brought to light. The nature of his oral instructions can be gathered to some extent from Bismarck's later statements and from noting what Eulenburg actually accom-

might be back in a few days. Cf. *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii, p. 85, and the still more definite statement in the interview of Nov. 20, 1892, referred to above. On the 13th of July he had Busch inform the newspapers that he was awaiting the King's commands at Berlin and might eventually return to Varzin (Busch, i, p. 42).

[37] Tgs. of 7.20 P.M., Nos. 142 and 143.

[38] Bismarck to Abeken, Tg., 7.37 P.M. (No. 145), and to the Crown Prince, Tg., 7.23 P.M. (No. 144). Although various political reasons have been suggested to explain this change of plan, I am inclined to think that Bismarck's health, already impaired by sleepless nights and all the excitement and chagrins recently experienced, did furnish the real reason. Before leaving Varzin he had not been certain that he would be able to go on as far as Ems (cf. No. 107).

plished at Ems. It is clear that he was charged, not only to set forth the Chancellor's general view of the situation, but also to announce that Bismarck's resignation would be forthcoming unless the King agreed to return at once to Berlin in order to convoke the Reichstag. It seems probable that Eulenburg was also ordered to insist that William should cease his conferences with Benedetti; and it is not unlikely that he was to hint at the necessity in which Prussia might soon find herself of demanding certain explanations from France.[39]

These arrangements made, Eulenburg departed to prepare for his journey,[40] while Bismarck took supper with Roon and Moltke, who had just returned from Silesia. During the meal a telegram from Werther at Paris brought the welcome news that Olózaga in his presence had announced to Gramont the fact of the renunciation.[41] In order to give this news the widest publicity before the King had had a chance to open his mouth on the subject to Benedetti, Bismarck hastened to send off a communiqué for the

[39] Bismarck's clearest later statement about the purpose of the Eulenburg mission was in the inspired article in the *Hamburger Nachrichten* of Dec. 16, 1892, where it was said: "Die Reise des Grafen Eulenburg nach Ems hatte nur den Zweck, Se. Majestät auf den Rücktritt des Ministerpräsidenten vorzubereiten, wenn der König nicht unter Berufung des Reichstags nach Berlin zurückkehrte." Hofmann, the editor of the Hamburg journal, whom Bismarck authorized to make this declaration, adds, in a later commentary, that Eulenburg "sollte . . . den eventuellen Rücktritt Bismarcks direkt in Aussicht stellen und hat dies auch getan" (Hofmann, *Fürst Bismarck, 1890–98*, iii, pp. 131 and 137). There is no textual proof that the King was to be asked to grant no more audiences to Benedetti, but that hypothesis seems very probable in view of the strong feeling on the subject which Bismarck displays in his memoirs, the numerous Tgs. about it on the night of the 12th, the total cessation of such Tgs. after Eulenburg's departure from Berlin, and the fact that soon after the latter reached Ems, the King did refuse to receive Benedetti again. Somewhat intriguing is the passage in the *Immediatbericht* of Sept. 23, 1888, where Bismarck says that "actenmässig feststeht, dass S.K.H. [the Crown Prince] schon damals wusste, dass ich den Krieg für nothwendig hielt und nur unter Rücktritt aus dem Amt nach Varzin zurückkehren wollte, wenn er vermieden würde. . . ." Can this refer to some documentary proof of Bismarck's intention to resign, conveyed through Eulenburg to the King, of which the Chancellor might have shown a copy to the Crown Prince at their conference on July 13?

[40] He left Berlin at 10.15 that night.

[41] This telegram must have made upon him an effect quite the opposite of that described in his memoirs: not consternation, for he had already known of the renunciation for three hours, but relief from the fear that the news would first be divulged by the King.

newspapers, whose deliberate inaccuracy was only a mild foretaste of what he and his supper-companions were to concoct for the press on the following evening.[42] Soon after, a telegram from Abeken completely cleared up the question that had been worrying him, by showing that Karl Anton had announced the renunciation both at Madrid and at Paris.[43]

Whether it was the result of spirits reviving under the effect of this news, or of his supper discussions with Roon and Moltke, Bismarck now proceeded to send one more telegram to Ems, in which for the first time it was hinted that Prussia might have to pass over to the offensive against France. The solution of the question by the Prince's withdrawal, he said, made no favorable impression upon public opinion at Berlin, already incensed by Gramont's threats. The public expected at least a satisfactory explanation of Gramont's speeches. But, after this ominous beginning, the conclusion was a bit lame (although one cannot be sure of how much or how little of a plan lay behind it): it was nothing more dreadful than the proposal that, in order to reckon with these feelings, the Prussian ambassador at Paris should be ordered to take a vacation, and that no secret should be made of the real motives for his departure.[44]

[42] Werther's Tg. and the version of it sent to the Wolff Tg. Agency at 9.10 P.M. are printed below under No. 138. The chief divergence is that Bismarck made it appear that Olózaga had made an "official" communication on the subject, which Werther had not said. In fact, nothing could have been less official than Olózaga's *démarche*, which was a confidential communication to which he had not been authorized by his government, which at that time did not even know of the renunciation.

[43] Abeken's Tg. of 6.50 P.M. (No. 141), received at Berlin at 8.50.

[44] Bismarck to Abeken, Tg., 9.45 P.M. (No. 147). In reviewing Bismarck's Tgs. to Ems of that evening, it seems clear that none of them affords an explanation for the mysterious story told in the memoirs of Hermann von Chappuis (*Bei Hofe und im Felde. Lebenserinnerungen*, p. 73), which has called forth quite an historical literature. Chappuis, then an adjutant of Prince Albert of Prussia, relates that on a certain evening (it is generally assumed that it could only have been July 12), while he was presenting to the King his brother's invitation to supper, Abeken came in with a telegram. On reading it, William, who was visibly much excited, declared: "This is the most important despatch I have ever received. Tell my brother that I shall probably not have time to come, as I shall have to work with Abeken. At any rate, don't wait for me." Historians have been very ready with guesses as to the nature of this weighty despatch: it was a Tg. from Bismarck

In the later course of the evening Bismarck conferred with Gorchakov and with Count de Launay, the Italian envoy. Very little is known about the first of these conversations, except that, in accordance with his attitude throughout the crisis,[45] Gorchakov disapproved of the provocative course taken by the French government,[46] and probably agreed that if after the renunciation any new demands were raised at Paris, France would clearly have put herself in the wrong in the eyes of Europe.[47] Whether Bis-

threatening resignation if war was avoided (Ollivier, xiv, p. 222), or if the King granted Benedetti another audience (Marx in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 1912, cix, pp. 508–525); or it was a Tg. from Werther at Paris, announcing that the French were going to demand new guarantees (Brase, *Emile Ollivier's Memoiren*, p. 116); or it was a Tg. from Bismarck, reporting the French suggestion made to Werther that afternoon for a "letter of apology" (Hesselbarth in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 1909, cvi, pp. 120 ff.). In the light of what we now know as to Bismarck's and Werther's correspondence with Ems, none of these conjectures will hold water. I am inclined to think that Chappuis, like other memoir-writers, has grossly exaggerated some trivial incident, and has thereby caused an immense amount of useless labor to historians.

[45] Gorchakov had from the first taken a tone very friendly to Prussia, while Alexander II, on the other hand, had repeatedly intimated his desire that the candidacy should be withdrawn. The statements hitherto current as to the communications exchanged between Russia and Prussia during the crisis seem to be badly in need of rectification. On the basis of Fleury's reports from St. Petersburg (in the book of Napoleon's ex-ambassador, *La France et la Russie en 1870*) and of one despatch in the *British Blue Book* (No. 41), it has generally been assumed that the Tsar twice addressed himself directly to King William in the interests of peace; and Fester has even undertaken to explain just how things took place — a letter sent from St. Petersburg by the 5 o'clock train on July 6, the King's reply telegraphed back by the 11th, and a return Tg. from Alexander to William on the 12th (*ED*, pp. 149–151). All this is mostly guess-work, based in part on Fleury's vague language, in part on his unproved inferences. It seems very unlikely that, if the Tsar had written or telegraphed directly to the King, some reference to the fact would not have been made in the Prussian official records. Moreover, in such a crisis correspondence by letter was far too slow a procedure; and as Alexander could scarcely have had a cipher with which he could telegraph to Ems, he would naturally transmit his views through the normal diplomatic channels. Hence, I think it highly probable that the early Russian communications referred to by Fleury are those contained in Reuss's Tgs. and reports of July 7 (Nos. 35 and 42; cf. Abeken's reply of July 8, No. 47), and July 9 (Nos. 69 and 74). The second Russian overture — the appeal to the King to order the renunciation of the candidacy — was then made through the Prussian chargé at St. Petersburg on July 12 (*v.* No. 134) and through a Tg. to Gorchakov at Berlin, as reported by Loftus, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 277, 278.

[46] So much appears from Bismarck's marginal note on No. 136.

[47] That was, at least, his attitude on the following day. Cf. No. 174.

marck on this occasion went further and, by offers of one kind or another, endeavored to assure himself of Russia's diplomatic and (in case of Austrian intervention) military support, if war broke out, is a question on which we have no evidence. In his talk with the Italian envoy, at any rate, we know that the Chancellor took a thoroughly peaceful tone, declaring that everything was now settled and that he was returning to Varzin on the morrow.[48] Before concluding his working-day, Bismarck took the precaution of sending out two circulars to his envoys abroad, the one affirming that the Spanish ambassador at Paris had officially announced the withdrawal of the candidacy to the French government, and the other intimating that the renunciation had been due to the influence exerted on the Hohenzollerns by the British government (by anybody in the world except the Prussian government!) [49] — and with that he retired for a sleepless night.[50]

Meanwhile, a new access of folly at Paris had already delivered the enemy into his hands. While we are still very ignorant of the course of events at the French capital on the morning of the 12th, and particularly of the debates in the cabinet meeting then held, it would seem that peaceful counsels had again gained the upper hand, that it was decided to be content with a renunciation which, according to Benedetti's forecast, would be communicated through the King of Prussia.[51] But about two o'clock in the afternoon the news arrived directly from Sigmaringen. The impressions which it produced were extremely divergent. While the Emperor professed himself highly pleased, and Ollivier for a while went about with his face wreathed in smiles, and the aged

[48] Münch to Beust, Tg., July 13, 12.10 A.M. (No. 244).

[49] These circulars, sent out only at 5.30 A.M., July 13, are printed as Nos. 156 and 157. Neither could lay claim to a faultless veracity: indeed, the second was almost the opposite of Bernstorff's statement, on which it purported to be based. Bernstorff had said only that the British government had tried to influence the Prince but — could not find him.

[50] Keudell, p. 442.

[51] This is the conclusion to be drawn from Gramont's Tgs. to Benedetti of 12.45 and 1.40 P.M., sent off after the cabinet meeting. The best account of events at Paris on this momentous day is that by P. Muret, "Ollivier et Gramont les 12 et 13 juillet, 1870," *Revue d'histoire moderne* (1911), xiii, pp. 305–328, xiv, pp. 178–213 — a trenchant attack upon the two ministers both as statesmen and as historians.

Guizot pronounced it the finest diplomatic victory won in his lifetime, the bulk of opinion refused to be satisfied with such a solution of the crisis.

There was something to be said for this latter point of view. There was as yet no certainty as to the authenticity of the purported telegram from Sigmaringen on which the news was based.[52] Assuming that the document was genuine, was it not suspicious that the renunciation emanated, not from the candidate, but from his father? What assurance was there that Leopold would hold himself bound by his father's action, any more than another German prince had done on a famous occasion a few years before? [53] Was it not to be feared that this candidate, whose whereabouts no one seemed to know, was about to repeat the comedy his brother Charles had played on the powers in 1866, by stealing off in disguise, in spite of all official assurances to the contrary, to turn up some fine morning at Madrid? Or, even if the candidacy were for the moment given up, what guarantee was there that it would not be renewed as soon as France was off her guard, as had happened several times before when it was reported to be abandoned?

Moreover, there still remained the question of the formal satisfaction that was due to France from Prussia. Regarding the candidacy (quite rightly) as an intrigue of Bismarck's against France, which had been conducted in defiance of the accepted rules of international comity and had leaked out only by accident before its consummation, the French government had, all along, desired to obtain some kind of reparation for this unfriendly proceeding. Almost any sort of courteous or conciliatory act might have been accepted, but hitherto Prussia had refused to make any such gesture. After the bold declaration of July 6 and after all the negotiations at Ems, whose outcome the public had so long been told to wait for, was the French cabinet now to announce to the Chambers that they had had to give up the hope of inducing

[52] The Spanish government remained skeptical on this point for twenty-four hours after receiving Karl Anton's Tg., and applied repeatedly to Berlin and Paris for information on the subject (unpublished Tgs. in the Madrid archives).

[53] The Prince of Augustenburg in the crisis that led up to the German-Danish war of 1864.

Prussia to show any regard for their wishes, but that they believed they had made an impression on the Prince of Hohenzollern, as they gathered from a telegram of his to Madrid, which they had intercepted and surreptitiously read?

Such were the commentaries put forth that day in excited circles, where 'Father Anthony's telegram' was a laughingstock and no words too strong for a government that would content itself with so derisory an outcome. Some such considerations, reinforced by his knowledge of the state of public opinion, swept the Duc de Gramont along that day into raising two new demands upon Prussia. Although there was something to justify them, as has been shown, these demands were, in the last analysis, unnecessary, tactless, and dangerous: and their result was to ruin the substantial victory just achieved and to place the peace of Europe once more in peril.

About three o'clock that afternoon — only an hour after learning of the renunciation [54] and before he had had time to confer about it with any of his colleagues — the Foreign Minister received Baron von Werther, who had just arrived in Paris that morning. After announcing the news from Sigmaringen, of which Olózaga brought a confidential confirmation at the beginning of the interview, Gramont seized the opportunity to dwell upon his desire to terminate the episode in a way that would destroy all traces of ill-feeling between France and Prussia. As a means to that end he *suggested* (without demanding, to be quite accurate) an expedient which he had, apparently, been meditating upon in the past hour: namely, that the King should write the Emperor a friendly letter, in which he would say that in authorizing Prince Leopold to accept the Spanish crown, he had not meant to wound the interests or dignity of the French nation; and that he associated himself with the Prince's renunciation with the wish and in the hope that every cause of discord between the two governments would now disappear. Such a letter, Gramont intimated, if brought in general terms to the knowledge of the public, might have the most useful effect. Ollivier, coming in at this point,

[54] Through Karl Anton's Tg. *in claris* to Olózaga, which was read by the French telegraph officials and promptly brought to the notice of the government.

strongly supported his colleague, and both ministers joined in begging the ambassador to lay their suggestion before the King, threatening that otherwise they would charge Benedetti to do so. Though not without some perception of the gravity of what he was doing, Werther accepted the commission. In taking this step, which was to prove so disastrous to himself, he was doubtless moved chiefly by his honest desire to assure peace, but also, perhaps, by the wish to spare his master further importunities from Benedetti, and by his knowledge that two days before William himself had thought of writing a letter to Napoleon.[55]

After this conversation Gramont about 4 P.M. went out to see the Emperor at St.-Cloud. What discussions took place there, what influences were brought into play, the world has never learned. At any rate, the upshot was a still more fateful decision, arrived at between Napoleon and the Duke, without the knowledge of Ollivier or the other ministers. By orders telegraphed to Benedetti at 7 P.M., and renewed with some slight modification toward midnight, the ambassador was directed to see the King at once and demand a promise that he would not again permit Leopold to renew his candidacy.[56] By this demand for "guarantees for the future," this "mad improvisation of St.-Cloud," as Ollivier has called it,[57] Gramont and his master were probably seeking only to end the affair in a way that would give them security against further surprises, and some kind of formal satisfaction from Prussia. But, contrary to their intentions though it may have been, they were in fact reopening the doors of the temple of Janus.

[55] The sources for this well-known episode are: Werther's long report to the King (often published before, but first printed in full as No. 150 below); Gramont, pp. 107–129; Ollivier, xiv, pp. 242–251, 586–592. Muret's critical review leaves little to be desired. He has shown, in particular, that Ollivier's indictment of the accuracy of Werther's report is entirely unfounded, and that while Ollivier's and Gramont's accounts frequently contradict each other, when one of them differs from Werther, the latter is usually sustained by the other.

[56] These Tgs. are printed by Gramont, pp. 151, 152 and 157, 158, and elsewhere. The precise formula for the new demand as given in the earlier Tg. was: "que le Roi . . . nous donne l'assurance qu'il n'autoriserait pas de nouveau cette candidature"; and in the later Tg.: "que le Roi veuille bien nous dire qu'il ne permettra pas au prince Léopold de revenir sur la renonciation que nous a communiquée le prince Antoine."

[57] xiv, p. 263.

CHAPTER VI

THE EMS INCIDENTS AND THE 'EMS TELEGRAM.' JULY 13

THE events of July 13 at Ems and Berlin form one of the most dramatic and decisive turning-points in German history. They have been related again and again, and yet, as Professor Max Lenz has written, "While the history of that day is in everybody's mouth and everyone thinks that he knows it, still, if we examine the picture that the sources reflect, there is scarcely a line that can be retraced with certainty." And he added that the real course of events could never be properly known until the telegrams exchanged between Berlin and Ems had been completely published.[1] Now that those documents are at hand, it seems possible to survey once more with profit the vicissitudes of that famous day.

Apart from the question of documentation, there are two things, in particular, which have introduced a great amount of confusion into the existing accounts of the subject. One of them is the long-established custom of dragging in Werther's report of the 12th, containing the "outrageous demand" for "a letter of apology," at far too early a stage in the proceedings, and then making the indignation produced by that report serve to explain all too many events that it should not. The common assumption has been that this momentous document arrived at Ems at 9 A.M., was known to the King and (by telegram) to Bismarck about noon, and exercised a decisive influence on most of their actions during the day. But it can now be shown, I think, with complete certainty that the Werther report reached Ems only at 3.50 P.M. and came to Bismarck's knowledge only about midnight — that is, in each case, after all the great decisions of the day had been made.[2]

[1] *Geschichte Bismarcks*, pp. 395–396.

[2] The confusion hitherto prevalent on this subject seems to go back to two main sources. In the first place, to Benedetti's statement (p. 383) that the Werther report was sent from Paris on the 12th by the 5 o'clock express, in which case it

The second cause of confusion in treating of a day so packed with events, in which it is important to establish the exact sequence of occurrences, and chronology becomes a matter of hours and minutes, is the failure of many historians to recognize certain simple facts about the use of telegrams. It is often assumed that a telegram must have been written just before it was actually sent off. It is too often ignored that between writing and sending off lay the important process of putting the document into cipher, which might take from thirty minutes to an hour. It is too frequently forgotten that a telegram, once put into cipher, might wait for some time before being sent to the station, and that then considerable delays were likely to occur before it was actually put upon the wires.[3] Hence even the

would have reached Ems at 9 A.M. — a statement that has since been copied by almost everyone. But Benedetti, I think, had no means of knowing anything about such a matter, and was probably simply casting about for some extraneous reason to explain why, after he had behaved so correctly toward the King in the park that morning, William then refused him an audience in the afternoon. Secondly, the chief source hitherto available as to the effect produced by the Werther report at Ems, the passage in the *Life of Abeken* (p. 251), is so badly garbled, chronologically and otherwise, that it has naturally led historians into mistakes as to the time when the King and Bismarck became acquainted with the report.

The fact would seem to be, very clearly, that Werther's despatch left Paris on the evening of the 12th by the 8 o'clock train, and reached Ems, as has been said above, at 3.50 P.M. the next day. At least four strong reasons can be advanced for this view. 1. It can scarcely be believed that Werther, whose interview with Gramont and Ollivier lasted till 4 o'clock (Ollivier, xiv, p. 251), could then have gone home, written a very long report (which had to be carefully weighed), had it copied into the neat chancery hand of the days before typewriters, and got off his courier to a station on the other side of Paris — all within one hour, in time for the 5 o'clock train. 2. In his Tg. to Abeken of July 12, 7.45 P.M. (No. 146), Werther stated that the report in question 'was going to Ems by courier this evening' — not 'had gone this afternoon.' 3. In the documents emanating from Ems on the 13th there is no allusion to the Werther report whatever until late in the afternoon. 4. In the first document that does mention it (Abeken's Tg. of 8.20 P.M., No. 176, which was probably drafted about 6.30 P.M.) the report is mentioned as one which 'had just arrived' from Paris, and which was being sent on to Berlin "immediately."

That Bismarck got his first inkling of the nature of the report about midnight on the 13th and received the text only about noon on the 14th, appears clearly from Nos. 176 and 204.

[3] No. 176 is an excellent example: a highly important telegram, which was evidently written before 6.30 P.M. (cf. No. 177), was sent to the telegraph station only at 8.20, and was not transmitted from there until 9.10.

scholar who has done most to clear up the history of this period [4] still assumes that between 2.45 and 3.50 P.M. on that day Abeken and Eulenburg could have found time to lay Werther's report before the King, work up the latter into an "heroic rage," win his consent to sending the famous 'Ems Telegram' to Bismarck, draft that rather long document, put it into cipher, forward it to the telegraph station, and get it despatched from there—really a marvellous performance for sixty-five minutes! It is not the lack of documents alone, then, that has blurred and distorted historical tradition on the subject.

The great event of the morning of the 13th was the celebrated scene between the King and Benedetti on the *Brunnenpromenade.* That scene had a rather complicated prologue, which has hitherto received very little attention. Benedetti's situation at the beginning of the day has, indeed, long been familiar. Having received during the night Gramont's telegram of 7 P.M., he felt it incumbent upon himself to discharge his delicate new commission at the earliest possible moment, both because of his superior's warning that without the promptest reply the government might no longer be able to restrain the excitement at Paris, and because he apparently feared that after Bismarck's expected arrival at 11.15 A.M. his chances of success would be badly compromised.[5] But what of the King's mood and plans before the battle began? We can now see that on the previous evening William had learned both that the renunciation was known to the French government,[6] and, therefore, presumably to Benedetti, and that if he (the King) were to give any sort of formal declaration on the subject to the ambassador, he would be going violently counter to Bismarck's wishes. Very early on the morning of the 13th Abeken must have laid before his master the telegrams received during the night: one from Werther, stating that he had had an interview with Gramont, a report of which was being sent to Ems;[7] a second one from Bernstorff, announcing that the French govern-

[4] Fester, *ED*, pp. 168 ff.

[5] As to Benedetti's apparent apprehensions over Bismarck's coming, cf. his Tg. to Gramont of July 12, 6 P.M. (Benedetti, p. 365).

[6] Through Werther's Tg. of 4.45 P.M. (No. 138).

[7] Tg. of July 12, 7.45 P.M. (No. 146).

ment was not satisfied with the declarations that Werther had presented;[8] and a third from Bismarck, with the suggestion already mentioned that German public opinion might now require some kind of satisfaction from France.[9] All this must have aroused in William's mind both the suspicion that further French demands might be forthcoming, and the conviction that if they were, they must be firmly refused.

The King then set out for his customary morning walk[10] in the *Kurgarten*, along the Lahn. Shortly afterwards Benedetti hastened to the royal adjutant, Prince Radziwill, to solicit an audience at the earliest possible moment. In explanation of this request, he intimated that he needed to see the King before the meeting of the Corps Législatif at Paris that day, in order to obtain from His Majesty a declaration or communication of which use could be made at that session.[11] By this all too frank admission the ambassador must have prejudiced his case from the outset, and helped to put William still more on his guard. Hence, when Radziwill had hastened over to report to the King, who was not far away in the park, he returned with a rather indefinite reply that His Majesty would grant an audience some time after his promenade.[12] William's intention at that moment, if one may believe Abeken's ensuing telegram to Bismarck,[13] was to receive the ambassador only after he had had a chance to consult with Count Eulenburg, who would arrive at 11.15. In any case, he would give no declaration that could be exploited before the French Chambers. He would say only that the answer at last received from Sigmaringen was that Leopold's decision had been announced to Madrid and Paris; that those capitals were informed of the news before he himself was; that Benedetti

[8] Tg. of July 12, 10.12 P.M. (No. 148).

[9] No. 147.

[10] This promenade was from 8 to 10 A.M., "as usual," the King relates in his narrative of the day (No. 262).

[11] This rather egregious blunder of Benedetti's is revealed for the first time by Abeken's Tg. to Bismarck of 10.15 A.M. (No. 159). The sessions of the Corps Législatif usually began at 2 P.M.

[12] Benedetti, pp. 370–371.

[13] No. 159.

would learn it from his own government; and that he (the King) had nothing more to say to him.[14]

This plan of action, however, was then immediately disarranged by William's own impulsiveness. The nine o'clock train brought the morning papers, with the news of the renunciation, which must have been quickly circulated among the crowd then swarming about the park, the springs, and the baths. A copy of the *Kölnische Zeitung* was handed to Abeken, who brought it to the King. Eager to attest the fact that Leopold's decision was known to all the world before he himself had received his answer from Sigmaringen, William promptly sent the newspaper by Radziwill to Benedetti, who had remained meantime in the park.[15] Doubtless a little chagrined at this offhand way of making the long-expected announcement, the ambassador replied that the news was already known to him from Paris; and in proof of this, in returning the newspaper to the King, he also transmitted a paraphrase of part of Gramont's despatch of the previous evening.[16] William, delighted to have this certificate that the French government was now officially informed, sent back his warmest thanks; but this rapid exchange of communications through Radziwill must have aroused in Benedetti's mind the hope that more important business might be transacted then and there, without waiting for a formal audience which might come too late to serve his purpose.

At all events, he seems to have manoeuvred so as to place himself in the King's path just as the latter was about to leave the park. Whether it was from a too hasty desire to discuss the news, or because it might have seemed rude to pass without some friendly words, William approached him and spontaneously com-

[14] This sketch of a final declaration to Benedetti, outlined at the beginning of the day, already has the tone and one of the most dangerous phrases of the later Ems Telegram. But one would like to know how much of its authorship belongs to William, and how much to Abeken.

[15] *Life of Abeken*, p. 252. William to Augusta, July 13, Oncken, p. 190.

[16] William's narrative of July 13 (No. 262). Gramont had ordered Benedetti to transmit such a paraphrase of his despatch. That the paraphrase was sent to the King at the time when the newspaper was returned seems probable, but it is far from clear how many times Radziwill went back and forth in the park that morning.

menced the conversation, while his brother, Prince Albert, withdrew a few paces, and their adjutants endeavored to hold back the curious crowd of onlookers.[17]

In the most amicable fashion, the King began by expressing his pleasure at this encounter, which enabled him to thank the ambassador orally for the important communication which the latter had just made to him. "You see," he added, "that you are better and more quickly informed at this moment than I am, for I have not received this good news directly. I have only a private telegram which says that it appears that Prince Leopold is renouncing the crown. Thus this affair is ended, which might have embroiled us in complications, in view of the way in which it has been regarded in France."

Benedetti at once began to point out the flaws in the renunciation, especially the fact that his government could yet feel no security about the matter, as it did not know whether Leopold would ratify his father's action. William protested that there could be no doubt about that; and, for the rest, he still had no direct, official communication from the Prince, but would probably receive it in the course of the day, and would inform Benedetti of it.

The ambassador then led up to his real object by suggesting that whatever was lacking in Karl Anton's declaration would be supplied if the King would announce to the French government that he promised never to permit Leopold to renew his acceptance, in case the Spanish crown should again be offered to him. Undoubtedly surprised, if not at the appearance of a new demand, at least at the scope of it, William immediately replied that such an engagement, unlimited in time, it was impossible for him to undertake. Arguments flew back and forth, the ambassador becoming more and more urgent — "almost imperti-

[17] The chief sources for the conversation are: Abeken's well-known Tg. to Bismarck of 3.10 P.M. (No. 163); William's narrative of July 13 (No. 262); his first letter of that day to the Queen (Oncken, p. 190); Radziwill's first report on the incidents at Ems, presented by Bismarck to the Reichstag July 20 (*Stenographische Berichte des Reichstages. I. Aussèrordentliche Session. Anlagen*, p. 9); Benedetti's Tg. of 10.30 A.M. and his long report of that evening (in his book, pp. 372, 376–379).

nent," William wrote afterward — and the King more and more immovable. Finally Benedetti made an unhappy attempt to carry consent by storm. Despite all that the King had hitherto said, after a moment's pause the ambassador summed up: "Well, Sire, I can, then, write to my government that Your Majesty has consented to declare that you will never permit Prince Leopold to renew the candidacy in question?" "At these words," the King later wrote, "I stepped back a few paces and said in a very earnest tone: 'It seems to me, Mr. Ambassador, that I have so clearly and plainly expressed myself to the effect that I could never make such a declaration, that I have nothing more to add.' Thereupon I lifted my hat and went on." [18]

Benedetti had seen his demand rejected, not without signs of irritation on the King's part toward the close, but he had not been in any way insulted, and he was not yet fully conscious of the gravity of his defeat. Returning to his hotel about ten o'clock,[19] he sent off to Paris a brief report of what had happened,[20] and then received Gramont's second telegram of the night before, which gave further evidence of the importance which the government attached to the demand for guarantees. Obviously it was necessary to make a second and supreme effort to put through that demand; and this Benedetti still hoped to do at the audience which had the night before been promised him [21] as soon as the King should receive his official reply from Sigmaringen.

Meanwhile William, on returning to his lodgings, had written a short note to Abeken, relating the incident in the park,[22] and,

[18] In describing the interview I have followed pretty closely William's own narrative, written shortly afterwards (No. 262), which seems to me by far the best account that we have. Benedetti has glossed over his own mistakes and the King's irritation, while the remaining narratives are rather brief and meagre.

[19] The scene on the promenade probably occurred about 9.30, although the monument which has by private generosity been erected on the spot, bears the inscription: "13 July 1870 9 Uhr 10 Minuten Morgens."

[20] Tg. of 10.30 A.M. (Benedetti, p. 372).

[21] In his book (p. 374) Benedetti states that this promise had been renewed by the King at the close of the interview in the park; but there is no evidence of this in his reports of that day or in any other contemporary source. The nearest approach to it is the phrase in William's narrative that he would "communicate" the reply as soon as it reached him, but this might be done by other means than an audience.

[22] This note makes up the first half of Abeken's later Tg. to Bismarck (No. 163).

after hearing the reports of various officials, about noon received Count Eulenburg in an audience that may have lasted about an hour. Precisely what was said on that occasion has never been revealed, but can to some extent be inferred from our knowledge of the purpose of the Eulenburg mission. Bismarck's anger over the existing situation, his threats of resignation, his demand for the King's return to Berlin and the convocation of the Reichstag, his discontent over William's too prolonged and conciliatory dealings with Benedetti, the need for adopting a sharper attitude toward France and for doing something to satisfy the incensed German public — these things, veiled, of course, in appropriate language, Eulenburg must have brought home to the mind of the King. And we may presume that he found a receptive listener. For William was, on the one hand, convinced that by his long patience with the French ambassador and his successful intervention at Sigmaringen he had done all that could fairly be expected of him in the interests of peace, and, on the other hand, he was irritated at the new French demand of that morning and at Benedetti's irregular and importunate way of presenting it. It would, perhaps, be premature to say that Bismarck's victory was already complete, but it was well on the way to being won.

A chance to make a test case immediately occurred. About one o'clock the King received from the newly arrived Colonel Strantz [23] Karl Anton's letter [24] with the formal confirmation of the renunciation. This raised the question whether Benedetti should now be given the promised audience. To prevent that, Abeken and Eulenburg joined forces. How much of a contest it cost them, we have no means of knowing; but, at all events, by two o'clock William had resolved not to receive the ambassador again, but merely to inform him through an adjutant that he (the King) had now learned from Sigmaringen of the renunciation of the candidacy, and that he considered the affair as definitively settled. This change of plan was doubtless due in

[23] Strantz seems to have arrived on the 12.15 train from Koblenz. That the letter which he brought was presented to the King about 1 P.M. is stated in Radziwill's second report of the day.

[24] This letter (of July 12) is printed by Zingeler, pp. 256, 257, with his usual rather exasperating omissions.

part to William's irritation over the demand for guarantees — this was the reason advanced for it in Abeken's subsequent telegram to Bismarck — and to his desire not to give Benedetti a chance to renew that demand. But it was a grave step to refuse an audience promised to the ambassador of France, particularly in such a crisis, and one may well doubt whether William would have ventured upon it but for Eulenburg's coming and Bismarck's threats.[25]

At just about the same moment, an even graver decision was taken. The King now authorized Abeken to send Bismarck an account of the day's events, with permission, if he saw fit, to inform both the press and the Prussian embassies abroad of Benedetti's demand and of the vigorous refusal that it had met with. It is impossible to say who originated this idea. Was it William, anxious, perhaps, to appease a dissatisfied public by a demonstration of how firm he could be? [26] Or was it Eulenburg, acting on his own initiative or on some hint from Bismarck to seize any chance he could find for a *coup de théâtre?* At all events, it was contrary to established international usage for a government to make such a revelation of a negotiation that was not yet concluded; in the existing situation it was highly dangerous; and not the least mistake of all (for a king who wanted peace) was to leave to a minister like Bismarck such latitude as to the scope and tenor of the publication.

Some time between two and three o'clock Abeken then drew up the famous 'Ems Telegram,' or rather the first version of that momentous document.[27] The first part of it consisted simply of

[25] Ever since Benedetti in his book first advanced the idea, the great majority of historians have explained this decision by assuming that the King had now received the Werther report and had become thoroughly angry with the French. It has already been shown that this hypothesis is untenable. Fester and Brandenburg ascribe the decision chiefly to Eulenburg's and Abeken's efforts, and Ollivier traces it solely to a kind of Bismarckian ultimatum.

[26] It may be recalled that as early as the 8th the King had suggested that "we owe Germany a public statement," and had wondered whether a public refutation of Gramont's speech would not be in order (Nos. 44 and 54).

[27] That these two decisions — to refuse Benedetti an audience and to authorize Bismarck to make a public statement about the Ems incidents — were taken at about the same moment, has never been sufficiently recognized. The difficulty has

the King's note to him of that morning describing the incident on the *Brunnenpromenade*. In the second part Abeken related — in a text laboriously worked out, with many changes and insertions [28] — the arrival of Karl Anton's letter, the King's decision not to see Benedetti, and the message which was now to be sent to the ambassador. Finally, there came the most important part of the document: the authorization to publish the French demand and its rejection.

Ollivier's charge that this telegram "constitutes a first very grave falsification" of the Ems incidents,[29] is far too severe. For, when examined, it reduces itself mainly into an indictment of Abeken for having wilfully failed to mention a series of events (the missions of Radziwill to Benedetti that afternoon) which had not yet taken place at the time when the telegram was written.[30] On the other hand, some exception may, perhaps, be taken to the opening sentence of the document, which seems to imply that Benedetti had forced himself upon the King, and which

been that, on the one hand, it was known that Radziwill conveyed the first decision to Benedetti about 2 o'clock, while, on the other hand, ever since Caprivi in 1892 revealed the fact that the Ems Telegram was sent off at 3.50 P.M., it has been assumed that the telegram must have been written just before that time. But it can now be shown that this document had been finished and put into cipher by about 3 o'clock (for it was sent to the Tg. station at 3.10). Moreover, since it narrates the events of the day only down to the time when the King decided not to see Benedetti again (precisely the point where the narrative is then resumed in Abeken's subsequent, hitherto unknown Tg. of 10.15 P.M.), it is clear that Abeken must have set to work on the final redaction of this Tg. about 2 o'clock. But it is interesting to note that he had begun to prepare a Tg. to Bismarck in the forenoon, as appears from the variants to be found on the rough draft of the Ems Tg. ("Graf Eulenburg angekommen. Unmittelbar vor seiner Ankunft schrieb mir S.M." "S.M. schreibt mir eben." See No. 163, footnote 2.). The work had then evidently been suspended for several hours. Was it because Abeken had been too busy? Or had he suspected that to transmit merely the King's note about the scene in the park would have made a bad impression on Bismarck — so mild a rebuff to Benedetti — and had therefore wanted to wait until Eulenburg and he had better news to report?

[28] As can be seen from the footnotes under No. 163, three of the changes made in the text of the Tg. were of a nature to stiffen the tone very considerably, while one of them removed a phrase which, if published, would have been highly obnoxious.

[29] xiv, p. 313.

[30] The general failure to recognize how early this Tg. was written has led many other historians into the same mistake as Ollivier.

conceals the fact that William himself had initiated the conversation. The phrases "für alle Zukunft" and "à tout jamais" are too strong a rendition of the French demand. Still more objection may be offered to the form in which the message to be sent to Benedetti was reported: it is, at least, much ruder than the message that was actually delivered.[31] On the whole, the events of the day were related with tolerable accuracy, but with a bluntness and acerbity which, while permissible enough in a confidential document, were out of place in one destined for publication.

While Abeken was toiling over his telegram, Prince Radziwill delivered the King's message to Benedetti. The ambassador, while expressing his thanks for this communication, at once recalled the fact that he had always desired to be authorized to report to his government the King's explicit approval of the renunciation. He added that, in accordance with new instructions from Paris, he was obliged to insist once more on the subject which he had raised in his interview with the King that morning. For both reasons he begged for a new audience. On receiving this request, William does not seem to have hesitated long[32] in resolving upon a concession which marked a considerable deviation both from his decision of one hour before and from what Bismarck would have desired.[33] Radziwill was sent back with a formal declaration that the King authorized the ambassador to telegraph to Paris that he approved of the renunciation.[34] But

[31] If one compares Abeken's Tg. with Radziwill's and Benedetti's reports of the message as it was delivered, one finds that while all three versions agree as to the earlier part — the message from Sigmaringen — the latter part is rendered as follows. Radziwill: "S.M. sähe hiermit diese Angelegenheit als abgemacht an"; Benedetti: "S.M. me priait de vous télégraphier qu'elle considérait cette affaire comme définitivement terminée"; but Abeken: "S.M. . . . dem Bothschafter nichts weiter zu sagen habe." In the first draft Abeken had even put in the insulting phrase, "und seiner [Benedetti's] Abreise nach Paris nichts mehr im Wege stehe."

[32] Radziwill's first errand to Benedetti was about 2 P.M., as he says in his report, and he must have been sent back with the King's concession in question not later than 3 o'clock (or Benedetti would not have had time to report this second mission in his Tg. of 3.45).

[33] Cf. No. 170.

[34] In his Tg. of 3.45 P.M. Benedetti gives as the exact terms of this declaration: "Le Roi m'autorise à faire savoir au gouvernement de l'Empereur qu'il approuve cette résolution." In his Tg. of 7 P.M. (referring probably to what was said on

as to the second point, the demand for guarantees for the future, the adjutant could only refer to what William had said in the park that morning. Still unwilling to acknowledge himself beaten, Benedetti thereupon made one more half-desperate appeal to be heard in a personal interview.

The King's final reply was delayed, first by dinner, and then by the arrival of news which must have destroyed the slighest hope that he would make a further concession. Werther's report had at last reached Ems. Abeken and Eulenburg, immediately recognizing what a gift Providence had sent them, concerted their tactics, and then hastened to their master to tell him that a despatch had arrived which was not fit to be laid officially before the King of Prussia. William replied that they might assume for a few moments that they were all private persons. The report was then read with its "demand" for what Abeken styled "a personal letter of apology from the King to the Emperor, to pacify the French nation." There can be no doubt that William was highly indignant. "Has anyone ever heard of such insolence?" he wrote to the Queen a few hours later. "I am to appear before the world as a penitent sinner, for an affair which was originated, carried on, and directed, not by me but by Prim, and he is now left out of the question altogether." He found such proceedings on the part of the French "inconceivable," the demand "humiliating," its transmission by Werther "very difficult to explain." The fatal report was promptly sent on to Berlin by courier, with the assurance that His Majesty could not be supposed to have taken any official cognizance of it, but that he desired Bismarck's advice at once as to what was to be done about it.[35]

Radziwill's third visit), he is still more explicit: "Le Roi a consenti, m'a dit encore son envoyé, à donner son approbation entière et sans réserve au désistement du prince de Hohenzollern." Radziwill, on the other hand, in his report makes the approval less categorical: "dass S.M. die Verzichtleistung des Prinzen Leopold in demselben Sinne und in demselben Umfange approbirten, in dem S.M. dies vorher mit der Annahme dieser Kandidatur gethan."

[35] Arriving at Ems, as has been shown, on the 3.50 train, the Werther report was probably in William's hands by about 5 P.M., as Abeken reported to Bismarck that he and Eulenburg had laid the despatch before the King "sofort." As to the effect produced on the King by the report: Abeken's letter to Bismarck of 6.30 P.M. (No. 177), and his Tg. of 8.20 (No. 176); William's note to Abeken (No. 178); the

After this new exasperation, it is intelligible enough that the final reply, which Radziwill carried to Benedetti about 5.30 P.M., was a flat refusal to grant another audience. The King could not consent, it was said, to renew the discussion as to guarantees for the future, since what he had said that morning must be taken as his last word on that subject. If the ambassador desired to connect other questions with this (a clear allusion, I think, to William's fear that Benedetti also was charged to demand a letter of apologies [36]), he would have to address himself to Bismarck.[37] That this latter declaration was made by the King's adjutant, is not mentioned by Benedetti, but it is reported in a telegram from Abeken to Bismarck. If the statement is true, it is of very considerable importance. For it would prove that the refusal to grant any more audiences to the ambassador extended, not merely to interviews for the purpose of discussing guarantees, as has frequently been said, but also to interviews on any subject connected with the Hohenzollern Candidacy. Bismarck's well-known statement in his redaction of the Ems Telegram was thus, apparently, not so far from the truth as has often been asserted.

The negotiations at Ems were, indeed, over, as Benedetti was well aware. But for "the mad improvisation of St.-Cloud," they might have ended with a mild French victory; for the ambassador had, after all, obtained William's formal approval of the renunciation: the King of Prussia had associated himself with the Prince's act. But this success had been compromised and overshadowed by the sharp rebuff on the subject of guarantees, and by the thrice-repeated refusal to grant a hearing to the personal

often-quoted passage in the *Life of Abeken* (p. 251); and William's second letter of July 13 to the Queen (Oncken, pp. 190–192). This letter, which various authors have inserted in various places in the history of the day, can now be set down as written after 7 P.M. (because of the reference to the news from Stuttgart just received through a Tg. from Bismarck, which reached Ems at 7.04. Cf. No. 161 and footnote appended).

[36] Cf. his letter of that evening to the Queen.

[37] To what is said about William's final reply in Radziwill's and Benedetti's reports, can now be added Abeken's Tg. to Bismarck of 10.15 P.M. (No. 184). This final bulletin as to the events of the day significantly fails to mention the important concession which the King had made to Benedetti: his formal approval of the renunciation.

representative of Napoleon. The outcome was, then, a French defeat — serious, indeed, but one that could be borne as long as it was veiled in secrecy. The centre of action now shifts to Berlin.

If the events of the 13th at Ems have been much misconstrued, in spite of the relative wealth of available sources, Bismarck's doings on that day, down to the time of his celebrated supper party, have hitherto remained entirely unknown, save for what little light was furnished by his three recorded talks with Busch, the Crown Prince, and Lord Loftus, the British ambassador.[38] It is, therefore, of much interest to attempt to reconstruct the history of a day which was to have so startling a finale.

From the reports of the Austrian, British, and Spanish envoys at Berlin, it may be gathered that the prevailing temper in the higher circles that day was one of malaise, humiliation, and uncertainty as to the future. The Crown Prince and the ministers alike felt embittered over the events at Ems and the surrender before French threats, implied in the renunciation. Rascon, the Spanish envoy, who for a week had been an assiduous visitor at the Foreign Office, reported: "In spite of the Prince's withdrawal, it is the opinion of almost all the important men of this country that war between France and Prussia is now inevitable." [39]

If this feeling fitted in with Bismarck's designs, he must also have found some encouragement in the news that came in from abroad. The latest tidings from Vienna were that, in spite of the ardent wooing of France, Austria would probably remain neutral in case of war.[40] While not much had yet been heard

[38] Historians have been ready enough with conjectures on the subject, but their hypotheses have been largely vitiated by the obsession of seeing at every step the traces of the Werther report. In the well-known conversation with Loftus that afternoon, for instance, it is constantly assumed that it was his indignation over the "letter of apology" that lay behind Bismarck's threats of action against France; and what eulogies have been passed upon his "incomparable self-restraint" and "statesmanlike greatness" in refraining from mentioning on that occasion a report of which (in fact) he had never heard!

[39] See the reports and telegrams of Münch and Rascon printed below as Nos. 245–248, 253; and Loftus, *Reminiscences*, i, p. 278.

[40] Cf. Schweinitz's reports of July 11–12 (Nos. 124–126, 133, 152).

from the South German states, Bavaria and Baden, at least, seemed inclined to do their patriotic duty if it came to an emergency.[41] On Russia's friendship the Chancellor could count; and England was likely to feel that after the renunciation nothing more could fairly be demanded of Prussia.

Bismarck's general attitude at the beginning of the day may be summed up by saying that, while he devoutly hoped that France would now come forward with new demands and clearly assume the rôle of the aggressor, still, if she refused to do so, he was quite prepared to take that burden upon himself. In one way or another, the quarrel must be kept going. The blot on the escutcheon could be removed only by war. Hence, while waiting eagerly, anxiously, for news from Paris, he also pondered over schemes for taking the offensive himself, if he had to.

Early that morning, after giving Busch his daily directions for tirades in the newspapers over the sins of France,[42] Bismarck conferred with the Crown Prince, to whom he made no secret of his determination to resign if war were avoided.[43] Something of the plans of action lurking in his head seems to come out in the despatch, which was probably drafted that morning,[44] to the Prussian envoy at Dresden, in which he declared that if within a few days he had not received complete assurance of the peaceful intentions of France, he would advise the King to convoke the North German Reichstag for the next week. Early in the afternoon the same threat was transmitted to Werther for his private information, with the clear intimation that Prussia was now expecting from France explanations as to Gramont's threats: if none were received, at the beginning of the next week the whole matter would be laid before the Reichstag.[45]

[41] Cf. Nos. 115 and 154, and for the dubious attitude of Württemberg, No. 135. See also Busch, i, p. 42.

[42] Busch, i, pp. 40–42.

[43] On this interview, cf. the somewhat garbled statements in the Crown Prince's diary (Poschinger, *Kaiser Friedrich*, ii, p. 395); Bismarck's *Immediatbericht* of Sept. 23, 1888 (Hahn, *Fürst Bismarck*, v, p. 571); Busch, iii, p. 244.

[44] No. 158. If this instruction was to reach Dresden that night, it must probably have been sent by the 1 P.M. train.

[45] Tg. of 2.25 P.M. (No. 162).

Hitherto Bismarck had been left quite in the dark as to the French attitude since the reception of the news of the renunciation.[46] About three o'clock in the afternoon the first indication on that subject arrived. Gorchakov transmitted the substance of a telegram from Okunev at Paris, which stated that, after learning of Leopold's withdrawal, Gramont had told Werther that 'the affair was not yet settled, as there still remained the question of [Prussia's] unfriendly procedure.'[47] This was indefinite enough, but it raised prospects of further French demands, and it evidently threw Bismarck into a state of great excitement. He at once telegraphed to Werther to learn whether the news was true, adding that if it were, "it must essentially influence our decisions."[48] Simultaneously, the same tidings were despatched to Eulenburg, with the comment that if this report were confirmed, the King's return to Berlin and the calling of the Reichstag could no longer be delayed.[49]

Just at this point, apparently, the British ambassador presented himself, and Bismarck seized the occasion for a characteristic flourish. Loftus had come to congratulate him on the happy ending of the crisis. He replied with grave doubts as to the prospects of peace, dwelling upon Gramont's provocative conduct, the general indignation that it had produced in Germany, and the telegrams that had poured in upon him that morning from Bremen, Königsberg, and elsewhere, praying that "the honor of the country should not be sacrificed." His information from Paris was, he continued, that the French were even yet not satisfied. He dilated upon the French military preparations (though here he could point to nothing more terrible than the collection of munitions, hay, and horses). Then, flashing forth the weapons in his own armory, he declared that if these military preparations continued, Prussia would have to demand explanations.

[46] Except in so far as a Tg. from Bernstorff of the night before might raise the suspicion that France was not yet satisfied (No. 148).

[47] Cf. Nos. 166–668. Some traces of this communication having become known to historians through Loftus, it has been generally assumed that Gorchakov conferred with Bismarck that afternoon. I know of no evidence for that. The Okunev Tg. was conveyed to Bismarck by Oubril, the Russian envoy.

[48] Tg. of 4.10 P.M. (No. 166). [49] Tg. of 4.10 P.M. (No. 167).

Moreover, Prussia required assurances that no more French demands would be made upon her in connection with the Spanish question. "After what has now occurred," he said, "we must require . . . some guarantee that we may not be subjected to a sudden attack; we must know that, this Spanish difficulty once removed, there are no other lurking dangers which may burst upon us like a thunderstorm." Unless some declaration were given by France to the European powers or in some official form that the present solution of the Spanish question was a final and satisfactory settlement of the French demands and that no further claims would be raised, Prussia would have to demand explanations. But even this was not enough. France must also explain or withdraw the menaces in the declaration of July 6, or Prussia would take the matter in hand. This is the most complete exposition we have of the various methods by which Bismarck thought to provoke a war. Behind this terrifying frankness, there was, of course, a plan. Well aware of Loftus's French sympathies and connections, Bismarck doubtless reckoned that this conversation would promptly be reported to Paris and would help to precipitate an explosion. And he was not, apparently, deceived in this calculation.[50]

Hard upon Loftus's departure came further sensational news, this time from Stuttgart. The Prussian representative there telegraphed that Varnbüler [51] had just called him and told him that "the latest demands of Gramont, in spite of the Hohenzollern renunciation," had deeply offended national feeling in Württemberg, and that the cabinet of Stuttgart had expressed itself

[50] This conversation is related in Loftus's despatch of July 13 (*British Blue Book*, No. 53) and in his *Reminiscences* (i, pp. 274–276), with some differences in substance and phraseology. Loftus hastened to inform Le Sourd of Bismarck's attitude (Ollivier, xiv, p. 319), and either through the French chargé or through Vienna a report of the Bismarck-Loftus conversation was promptly sent to Paris and was one of the things considered by the French cabinet on the night of July 14, when war was virtually decided upon (Ollivier, xiv, pp. 373, 374). While historians have differed a great deal as to the precise time when Loftus saw Bismarck, I think the hour can safely be put about 4 P.M. — i.e., after Bismarck had "received from Paris (though not officially from Baron Werther)" his first news of the French attitude, but had not yet got the tidings from Stuttgart, which came soon after 4, and which he would probably have mentioned if he had had them.

[51] Württemberg Minister of Foreign Affairs.

in that sense at Paris.[52] It was doubtless with gusto that Bismarck hastened to convey these tidings to the newspapers.[53] But it was with a positive hunger to know what these "latest demands" amounted to, that, only an hour after his previous despatch, he again telegraphed to Werther: "It is urgently necessary that you should inform me in detail what M. de Gramont said to you after he had learned of the Prince's renunciation. We already have hints about it from Stuttgart, Munich,[54] and St. Petersburg, and from you, as yet, nothing." [55] An hour or so later, in sheer desperation, the Chancellor then telegraphed to Bernstorff in London to say that he suspected that Werther's correspondence was being interfered with, and to beg for the good offices of the British government to put him into communication with his ambassador in Paris.[56]

Such was the immediate background of the historic supper party that evening, at which Roon and Moltke were again Bismarck's guests. From the Chancellor's memoirs one would infer that the meal began in most lugubrious fashion, that all three men were extremely dejected, and that the talk turned chiefly on Bismarck's determination to resign.[57] In reality, however, the temper and the talk were probably very different. It seems much more likely that the conversation turned upon the tantalizing vagueness of the news from Paris, upon the plans for a diplomatic offensive which Bismarck had outlined to Loftus, and upon the impatience of all three men for immediate action. The best proof of this is the remarkable and hitherto unknown tele-

[52] Radolinski to Bismarck, Tg., 2.08 P.M., received at Berlin at 3.25 P.M. but probably not deciphered and ready for Bismarck's attention until about 4 (No. 161).

[53] Cf. this Berlin despatch of the evening of July 13: "Es heisst, dass die französische Regierung sich durch die Entsagung des Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern nicht für befriedigt hält; es wird daher die Berufung des Norddeutschen Reichstags für nächste Woche erwartet" (Leipzig *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of July 15). The London *Times* of July 15 also has a Berlin Tg. of the evening of the 13th to the same effect.

[54] What the information from Munich was, I have not been able to discover.

[55] Tg. to Werther of 5.10 P.M. (No. 172).

[56] Tg. of 6.50 P.M. (No. 175).

[57] See the famous passage in the *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii, pp. 87–93, which is, from a literary standpoint, a masterpiece.

gram which was doubtless composed at that supper table as the upshot of their discussions down to that moment, and which was then sent off over Bismarck's signature to the King. It ran:

In view of the growing exasperation of public opinion over the presumptuous conduct of France, symptoms of which are coming in to me from the most diverse parts of Germany, I hold it necessary that we should address to France a summons [58] to explain her intentions toward Germany. The text of such a document can be fixed only with the coöperation of Your Majesty's official and natural advisers. Therefore, jointly with General von Moltke and von Roon, I venture to renew my respectful request that Your Majesty will deign to return to Berlin.[59]

Some further sentences, which were not included in the telegram as sent, help to explain further the programme which the three men then had in mind. In view of Gramont's reported utterance, it was assumed that France did not regard the crisis as ended. On the other hand, if new French demands were expected, it was not, apparently, anticipated that they would be of such a nature as to furnish an immediate *casus belli*. Hence the Reichstag was to be called at once and apprised of the smouldering quarrel; and, with the moral support of this assembly, Prussia would then send France an ultimatum, a categorical demand to know what her intentions were, which would, pretty certainly, produce a war. If one places this document alongside Bismarck's declarations to Loftus and his earlier utterances of the day, it would seem as certain as any such conjecture can be, that even if France had not raised the demand for guarantees, even had she contented herself with the renunciation of the Hohenzollerns, there would still have been a war, nevertheless. The difference was solely that in this case Prussia would have assumed the rôle of the aggressor which, as matters actually developed, fell upon France. At any rate, the plan of campaign which has just been described was immediately relegated to the background by the

[58] Bismarck started to write "ultimatum," and then crossed it out.

[59] No. 181. This Tg., all in Bismarck's handwriting, was probably drafted about 7 P.M., but, after being put into cipher, was sent to the Tg. station only at 8.10. Abeken's Tg., which then so entirely changed the situation, had arrived in Berlin at 6.09; but the deciphering of this rather long document apparently took so much time that it was brought to the supper party only after Bismarck's Tg. to the King had been sent off to be coded and despatched.

arrival, only a few minutes later, of Abeken's telegram from Ems.

The scene that followed was, perhaps, the episode of Bismarck's life which he ever afterwards most loved to describe and to exult over. The unforgettable account of it in his memoirs can be supplemented by many others from his interviews and table-talk,[60] all of them agreeing very well, at least, in their general sense and spirit.

As he was accustomed to relate it, the first effect of the Ems Telegram upon his companions was to plunge them into such gloom and despondency that "the two old blood-spillers" lost all appetite. Presumably, their reaction was that the King had treated Benedetti quite too gently: he ought to have flared up, declared himself insulted, done something drastic; a fine opportunity for war had been lost. There was a long pause. Meanwhile Bismarck, studying the telegram, was beginning to perceive the possibilities contained in its final phrase, the permission to publish the news. But before acting upon the inspiration that had come to him, he first put to Moltke a question as to how confident he was that they were ready for war. On receiving the most vigorous assurances on that subject,[61] Bismarck seated himself at a small side-table, pencil in hand, and by extensive and judicious omissions and combinations produced a

[60] The accounts given: to Busch, Dec. 19, 1870, and Oct. 20, 1877 (*Tagebuchblätter*, i, pp. 546, 547, and ii, p. 485); to Lucius von Ballhausen, Sept. 26, 1876, and Jan. 12, 1877 (*Bismarck-Erinnerungen*, pp. 91, 92, 98); to Mittnacht, Feb. 23–24, 1889 (*Erinnerungen an Bismarck*, ii, p. 54); to Maximilian Harden, Sept. 1892 (Poschinger, *Neue Tischgespräche und Interviews*, i, p. 398); in the *Neue Freie Presse*, Nov. 20, 1892 (Poschinger, *Bismarck und die Parlamentarier*, ii, pp. 128–130); in the same newspaper (through H. Hofmann), Apr. 1, 1897 (Poschinger, *Also sprach Bismarck*, iii, p. 296). Most of these accounts are conveniently brought together and compared in Pahncke's already cited work, *Parallel-Erzählungen*, etc., pp. 162–170.

[61] This query and its answer, reported in almost all Bismarck's later accounts, find some contemporary confirmation in an article that appeared in the *Magdeburger Zeitung*, July 16, 1870 (cited from the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of the following day): "Aus bester Quelle erhalten wir nachfolgende Notiz: 'General von Moltke hat am 13 Abends im Ministerrathe in Uebereinstimmung mit dem Minister v. Roon erklärt, dass Preussen hinsichtlich seiner Heeresverfassung, Ausrüstung, Hülfsmittel, etc., noch nie in der Lage gewesen wäre, mit solchen Aussichten auf Erfolg einen Krieg aufzunehmen, wie gegenwärtig. . .' "

new version of the telegram that suited his purpose. As he read the new redaction to them, his companions were amazed and delighted at the subtle and effective transformation. Translating Moltke's military jargon — what had before sounded like a call for a parley now sounded like a flourish of trumpets before a combat. Bismarck serenely explained his expectations. "If I not only publish this text . . . at once in the newspapers, but also transmit it by telegram to all our embassies, it will be known in Paris before midnight, and not only because of its contents but because of its mode of publication, it will have the effect of a red cloth upon the Gallic bull." [62] His two guests quickly recovered their appetites and were soon in joyous mood. Roon declared, "The old God still lives and will not let us perish in shame"; while the usually impassive Moltke so far forgot himself as to exclaim, "If I only live to lead our armies in such a war, then afterwards the devil may take 'the old carcass.'" [63] Such is the gist of Bismarck's various narratives. He told the story so consistently for nearly thirty years, and what he related is in itself so probable, that in spite of the doubts that have often been raised, it seems safe in this case to accept his account as substantially true.[64]

From Bismarck's revision the Ems Telegram emerged cut down by half and very much simplified.[65] All the various incidents in Abeken's despatch were reduced to two: (1) Count Benedetti had presented a demand for guarantees "for all future time," and (2) "His Majesty thereupon refused to receive the French ambassador again, and sent word to him through the adjutant on duty that His Majesty had nothing further to communicate to the ambassador."

Many of the charges brought against Bismarck's editing seem scarcely well founded. He can hardly be blamed for not simply republishing Abeken's text in full, for there was much in it that was not suited for that. And, on the other hand, while it has

[62] *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii, p. 91. [63] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

[64] Cf. also the confirmatory statement by Count von Roon, son of the War Minister, in Penzler, *Bismarck nach seiner Entlassung*, ii, pp. 111, 112.

[65] See the texts of Abeken's Tg. and Bismarck's version below, Nos. 163 and 187.

sometimes been maintained that he was authorized to publish only Benedetti's demand and the refusal which the King had made in the park (that is, not the later refusal of an audience), Abeken's despatch did not, clearly at least, impose any such limitation. It is also true, as Bismarck always emphasized, that he added nothing that was not in the original telegram, and changed scarcely any single word in it.

But, as he has also pointed out, it is possible to change the spirit and sense of a document completely by leaving out things and by bringing together things which originally had no connection. That is what Bismarck did. The spirit of the original despatch was altered by omitting every trace that even Abeken's sour telegram had still preserved, of how courteous and correct the King had been toward Benedetti. The sense of it was altered: (1) by insinuating that the *sole* answer William had made to the French demand was to break off relations with the ambassador; (2) by concealing the primary object of the sending of the adjutant (to confirm the news of the renunciation), and the real meaning of the words "nothing further to communicate"; and, above all, (3) by so phrasing things that the public was likely to draw the conclusion — as it actually did — that all relations with France had been abruptly and decisively terminated. In short, the telegram was, in effect, reduced to the one startling assertion, presented with exaggerated emphasis and with misleading implications: the King of Prussia has refused to receive the ambassador of France.

In doing this, Bismarck was going far beyond the King's intentions, as he was doubtless well aware. He also had no doubts and no scruples as to the probable outcome — war. As one German historian has said, "It was a blow in the face of France. This despatch was almost certain to drive her into war, and that was precisely its aim." [66] Another German scholar has attested: "It was the Ems telegram that provoked the war, and it was intended to do so." [67] But, indeed, no one has ever made such assertions more strongly than Bismarck himself.

[66] Erich Marcks, *Kaiser Wilhelm I*, p. 301.

[67] Delbrück in the *Preussische Jahrbücher* (1909), cxxxvii, p. 316.

About nine o'clock on the evening of the 13th, the great news was given to the capital through an extra edition of the semi-official *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. It contained nothing but Bismarck's version of the telegram,[68] but the effect was tremendous. "From the depths of all hearts it called forth a unanimous, thousand-voiced cry of jubilation. . . . Excited crowds filled the streets; men embraced each other amid tears of joy; thundering *Hochs* for King William shook the air." [69] "As though a stain had been wiped from the national escutcheon, as though a burden, too heavy to be borne for a long time past, had been cast off at last, people were thanking God that their honour had been ultimately vindicated against intolerable assumption. . . . By 10 o'clock the square in front of the royal palace was crowded with an excited multitude. Hurrahs for the King and cries 'To the Rhine!' were heard on all sides. Similar demonstrations were made in other quarters of the town. It was the explosion of a long pent-up anger. . . . The King had been affronted beyond endurance, and had given the only possible answer. The crisis had arrived. . . . In all the clubs and taverns, in many a private house, people remained together nearly the whole night. . . . Only at break of day the streets assumed their usual aspect." [70]

One thing that helps to explain the immense effect of that laconic telegram is the hitherto overlooked fact that Bismarck evidently accompanied the official communiqué to the press by privately giving out some details — and apparently some exaggerated details — as to the interview on the promenade. The nature of the rumors that then flew about on that subject is briefly indicated in a Berlin telegram of that evening to the London *Times:* "This afternoon King William was walking with Count Lehndorff, his adjutant, in the *Kurgarten* at Ems, when

[68] The text as given to the press was not altogether identical with that with which the world is now familiar (the version telegraphed that night to the Prussian embassies), but the differences seem quite without significance.

[69] Sybel, vii, pp. 243, 244.

[70] Berlin despatch of July 14, printed in the London *Times* of July 18, and reprinted in *Letters on International Relations before and during the War of 1870, by 'the Times' Correspondent at Berlin* (Karl Abel), ii, pp. 129–131.

M. Benedetti accosted him and proffered his last extravagant demand. The King turned round and ordered Count Lehndorff to tell M. Benedetti that there was no reply and that he could not receive him again." [71] Popular fancy could then embroider upon this theme, and there was thus to arise that legend which gave to the Ems incidents an almost epic character and, in the minds of both the French and the German public (for opposite reasons), an irreparable significance.

But it was not enough for Bismarck's purpose to inform the world through the newspapers of the signal rebuff that France had met with. It was necessary to give the affront a formal and official character by communicating the news through his embassies to all the leading governments of Europe. Shortly after 11 P.M., then, the Ems despatch in the revised version was telegraphed to his representatives in, or to the governments of, all the German states, and to the North German envoys at London, St. Petersburg, Vienna, Florence, Madrid, Brussels, The Hague, Berne, and Constantinople. In each case, the envoy was ordered to communicate the telegram (usually it was added "without delay") to the government to which he was accredited — a part of these despatches which has hitherto not been published, but which should be emphasized in view of the assertion, so freely made later on by Bismarck and his defenders, that he had done no more than send to the German governments and to a few of his envoys abroad a newspaper telegram, purely for their own information, and not at all for the purpose of a communication to the powers, as the French calumniously said.[72] Bismarck's further public statement,[73] that nothing but "the newspaper telegram" had been sent, was also not true. It can now be shown [74] that the despatches to London, St. Petersburg, and Munich contained as a sort of postscript a direct appeal to the sensitive hearts of Lord Granville, the Tsar, and the King of

[71] *Times* of July 15.

[72] Cf. Bismarck's utterly mendacious statement on this subject in his circular of July 18 (*Stenographische Berichte des Reichstages. I. Ausserordentliche Session. Anlagen*, p. 11), or Keudell's naïve refutation of French slanders, *Fürst und Fürstin Bismarck*, p. 443.

[73] In the circular mentioned in the previous note.

[74] See No. 187.

Bavaria over the (alleged) fact that Benedetti, in order to present his demand, had in provocative fashion started a conversation with the King on the promenade against the latter's will. With the sending of these telegrams, the trap was finally set.

The later hours of that evening must have been for Bismarck a time of triumph. Quite apart from the patriotic frenzy in the streets, nearly all the news that arrived was excellent. Werther, heard from at last, reported that Gramont's declarations in the Chamber that afternoon, while indecisive and ambiguous, were interpreted in military circles as warlike; and meantime military and naval preparations for war were being pushed on in the most comprehensive fashion. These telegrams left the impression, indeed, that the French cabinet was divided in opinion and the outcome not yet certain, but the balance seemed to be inclining toward war.[75] Bismarck hastened to capitalize the news of the French military preparations by telegraphing it to his envoys at London, St. Petersburg, and Vienna.[76] Meanwhile Bernstorff had reported that England had declared at Paris that France must content herself with the renunciation; and Gladstone had said that if France now began a war, she would put herself most flagrantly in the wrong.[77] This was further excellent material for a circular, which was sent out the following day.[78] From Stuttgart came the news that Württemberg, the one South German state whose policy had aroused apprehensions, had now decided to adopt a patriotic attitude.[79] Finally, from Abeken's last telegram of the day,[80] Bismarck learned the concluding chapter of the Ems incidents: that the King had victoriously resisted all Benedetti's pleas for an audience; that the Ems negotiations were over.

But this varied day was not to end without two more sensations. Well after midnight came a telegram from Werther, an-

[75] See Werther's four Tgs., printed below as Nos. 160, 164, 169, 170, all of which probably reached Bismarck only after his redaction of the Ems Telegram.

[76] Tgs. of 10.30 P.M. See No. 164, footnote.

[77] Tg. of 7.20 P.M. (No. 179).

[78] Only to the German courts and to Brussels. See No. 179, footnote.

[79] Rosenberg's Tg. of 11.10 P.M. (No. 186), received at 12.10 A.M.

[80] No. 184, received at Berlin at 11.59 P.M.

nouncing that Gramont had just told the Russian chargé d'affaires of the demand for guarantees made at Ems, and that he had added that if this demand were rejected, war was inevitable.[81] Bismarck must have chanted hosannas. About the same time, first from Abeken,[82] and then from two telegrams from the ambassador himself,[83] the Chancellor at last learned the substance of the Werther report of July 12: the "demand for the letter of apology."

It is difficult to guess what Bismarck's predominant feeling was at that moment: wrath at his blundering subordinate, or joy that the French had thus exposed themselves again to a formidable counter-stroke. At any rate, Werther's fate was sealed. In the early hours of the morning Bismarck telegraphed his recommendations to Ems: the King should instruct Werther that his report was considered as *non avenu*, and that he must inform Gramont that he could not carry out such a commission; if the French government wished to lay such a proposal before the King, it would have to choose another channel. Werther must then say that he had requested and obtained a furlough, and must at once return to Berlin to explain his conduct.[84]

From another draft [85] for a telegram to Ems, one may infer that Bismarck for a while pondered over another project: that Werther should return to Berlin immediately, without making any communication to Gramont, leaving it to the Prussian government to reply directly to the insulting French demand. That reply would probably have been another *coup de théâtre*, to complete the work of the Ems Telegram. At any rate, Bismarck refrained from sending off this suggestion. He had, after all, done enough for one day.

[81] Tg. of 9.06 P.M., received at Berlin at 12.34 A.M. (No. 182).
[82] Tg. of 8.20, received at Berlin only at 11.30 P.M. (No. 176).
[83] Nos. 183 and 185, received at Berlin at 1.30 A.M. and 12.30 A.M. respectively.
[84] Bismarck to Abeken, Tg. July 14, 2.30 A.M. (No. 192).
[85] See the footnote under No. 192.

CHAPTER VII

THE FINAL DECISIONS. JULY 14–15

WITH the events of the 13th the die was cast, and the sequel may be passed over more briefly.

That a conflict was henceforth inevitable, all Berlin seems to have recognized, and the rest of Germany, too, as fast as the news of the Ems Telegram travelled. As soon as he saw the extras on the night of the 13th, the Dutch minister reported home, "War henceforth certain."[1] The Austrian envoy informed his government that any attempt at mediation would not only be useless, but would be regarded by Prussia as an affront; and the Italian envoy reported in much the same sense.[2] One Berlin newspaper wrote on the 14th: "Nowhere does one hear any other view than that war with all its consequences is the only possible answer to the present French insults."[3] On first reporting the Ems Telegram, a Leipzig newspaper commented: "So, now the decision has fallen! Germany accepts the war which it most surely has not provoked."[4] As for Bismarck, he henceforth conducted himself as if war were a settled matter: it remained only to get ready for it.

As one means to that end, he exerted himself still further to inflame public opinion. On the 14th the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* was allowed to print more or less veracious details as to how utterly Benedetti had forgotten the rules of diplomatic decorum, and to insinuate that France had announced the intention to bring forth other grievances against Prussia besides the Spanish affair. In the unofficial press stories were also given out about the letter of apology which Napoleon was now demanding; and really grotesque tales were printed about Benedetti's insolence (for example, how, after being rebuffed in the park, he

[1] Ollivier, xiv, p. 334. [2] See Münch to Beust, July 14 (No. 253).
[3] *Börsen-Zeitung*, quoted in *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of the 15th.
[4] *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 15.

had even pursued the King to his lodgings, clamoring for further discussion!).[5]

Already the situation seemed to Bismarck sufficiently ripe to proceed to the immediate mobilization of the army, as he informed the Crown Prince that day.[6] But this depended on the prompt return of the King to Berlin, a matter about which the Chancellor was becoming increasingly impatient and anxious. Although this return, together with the summoning of the Reichstag, had been the chief object of Eulenburg's mission, not a word had been said on either subject in any of the bulletins received thus far from Abeken. Twice on the 13th Bismarck had renewed his exhortations,[7] without apparent results. His downright irritation over the matter then came to light when, toward noon on the 14th, he took the unusual step of sending Eulenburg an unciphered telegram: "It seems urgently necessary that the ministers should immediately assemble here under the presidency of His Majesty." [8] As William's reaction on the revised Ems Telegram had also hitherto remained unknown, the Chancellor added, in cipher, the warning, intended doubtless for His Majesty: "Our position as ministers would be untenable in the face of public opinion, if the King receives Count Benedetti in Ems again." [9]

The resolution to return to the capital seems to have cost William a struggle. It meant — Reichstag, mobilization, and war. Even on the evening of the 13th, he was probably not yet convinced that such drastic measures were necessary. Moreover, the Queen, from Koblenz, was still, apparently, making every

[5] Any reader who will go through German newspapers or the London *Times*, July 15–18, can collect an interesting group of such legends. It is regrettable that Bismarck's share in their fabrication cannot be better determined, as the usually so loquacious Busch (his press-agent) becomes very reticent at this point.

[6] This appears from the *Immediatbericht* of Sept. 23, 1888, which has already been frequently cited above.

[7] Cf. Nos. 167 and 181, also the unsent first draft of No. 192.

[8] Tg. of 11.55 A.M. (No. 201).

[9] No. 201. I am inclined to think that it was at just about this time that Bismarck drafted the undated and unsent Tg. to Eulenburg (No. 149), which comes nearer than any other document that I have seen in the archives, except No. 201, to suggesting a threat of resignation.

effort to influence him toward peace.[10] The events at Ems on the morning of the 14th, which led up to the ineluctable decision, are, therefore, not without some interest, though it is not easy to follow them in detail.

It seems likely that before the promenade Abeken, as on the previous morning, reported to the King the chief telegrams that had arrived during the night: Werther's alarming reports from Paris, Bernstorff's assurances of how much the French attitude was condemned at London, Bismarck's reaction upon the suggested "letter of apology," and, above all, the joint telegram from Bismarck, Moltke, and Roon of the previous evening, proposing a kind of ultimatum to France.[11] Presumably, all this was not without its effect, particularly the telegram last mentioned.[12] But the great surprise came in the course of the promenade, when the nine o'clock train brought the morning newspapers with Bismarck's edition of the Ems Telegram. According to what seems to be a well-authenticated story, the King, on first seeing the text, read it over twice, and then, visibly affected by the tone of it, handed it to Eulenburg with the comment, "That is war." [13] This news seems to have ended all hesitation. Returned to his quarters, the King conferred with Abeken and announced his decision to set out for Berlin the next morning. The despatch by which Abeken conveyed these welcome tidings to Bismarck contained no word of comment or protest about the manipulation of the Ems Telegram, unless it may be found in the phrase, "His Majesty will not receive Count Benedetti again *here*" — perhaps a reminder that the King reserved the right to continue

[10] On the morning of the 14th she sent him an exposé of the situation, the character of which can be inferred from his reply (Oncken, pp. 192, 193).

[11] Nos. 164, 179, 181, 182, and 192.

[12] It is a strange fact that Bismarck should not, on the evening of the 13th, have telegraphed to Ems precisely what he had done. But there is no trace of such a communication. The King seems to have learned of it only through the newspapers.

[13] This story, first published in the *Augsburger Abendzeitung* of July 17, 1895, purporting to be based on communications of Eulenburg, has been reprinted by Delbrück in his *Erinnerungen, Aufsätze und Reden*, p. 350, with the statement that he could confirm its authenticity.

the negotiations in Berlin.[14] About the same time orders were sent to Werther in exact accordance with Bismarck's suggestions.[15] How completely William was coming around to his Chancellor's standpoint is further indicated by his letter to Augusta of that morning, in which he courteously tosses aside the Queen's arguments for peace as based on a situation that is "already behind us," has now discovered that there had been no "negotiations" with Benedetti — only "conversations," admits that a formal interpellation will have to be addressed to Paris,[16] and ends with the despondent cry: "All is in vain if the *brouilleurs* [the French cabinet] demand war. It is clear enough!" [17]

That afternoon, setting out for Koblenz to pay the Queen a farewell visit, the King did consent to see Benedetti briefly at the railway station, in order that the latter might have his *audience de congé*. Though courteous and friendly enough, and although he alluded to negotiations that might still be conducted at Berlin, William took pains to enter into no discussion, and the interview was very quickly ended.[18] Two hours later, at five o'clock, Benedetti departed for Paris.

The French capital at that moment contained another diplomat whose position was even more unfortunate, the Prussian ambassador. The correspondence of the 14th deals largely with a chapter that might be entitled "the sorrows of Werther." All through that day reprimands of the worst sort rained upon the ambassador's head, from Ems and from Berlin.[19] Meanwhile

[14] Tg. of 11.15 A.M. (No. 196). The tale in the *Life of Abeken* (p. 254) of how, early on that morning, Count Lehndorff came to Abeken to report in desperation that the King meant to stay in Ems, probably until Tuesday (the 19th), and how Abeken then hurried to William and after a long conference came back only about 11 A.M., with the news that the King would leave the next morning, does attest the uncertainty that long prevailed about the return to Berlin; but I am a little doubtful as to the details of the story.

[15] Tg. of 10.50 A.M. (No. 195).

[16] Clearly an allusion to the quasi-ultimatum proposed by Bismarck, Moltke, and Roon.

[17] Oncken, pp. 192, 193.

[18] Benedetti, p. 386. Oncken, p. 131.

[19] See Nos. 193, 194, 195, 200, and 204. Werther's famous report was evidently sent on from Ems on the evening of the 13th by the train at 6.35, and reached Berlin the next morning at 11.28.

he had to discharge the humiliating task prescribed by Bismarck, of seeing Gramont and informing him how his own government had disavowed him. It was only at the close of the afternoon that he at last secured an interview with the French Foreign Minister, recited his confession, and intimated in a way that was clearly understood that he had been ordered to leave Paris for a vacation of indefinite length.[20] This announcement produced on Gramont the effect that Bismarck probably intended. That at such a critical moment the Prussian ambassador should declare that he was going away on a vacation — this, coupled with the Ems incidents, seemed to mean only one thing: that Bismarck was bent on sundering diplomatic relations.[21] The fact of Werther's recall was undoubtedly part of the "uninterrupted succession of bad news, each item graver than the last," [22] which poured in upon the French cabinet on the night of the 14th and hastened its unhappy decision. With the Ems Telegram, it was one of the chief reasons for war put forth by the French government on July 15.

Meanwhile, on the 14th, England had attempted a friendly intervention between the two prospective belligerents. At the cabinet meeting held that noon it had been decided to propose that, on the one side, France should waive the demand for guarantees, and, on the other side, the King of Prussia should communicate to France his consent to Leopold's renunciation.[23]

[20] Werther left Paris on the 15th, to return home in disgrace. His diplomatic career was not yet entirely terminated, however, for in 1874 Bismarck consented to send him as envoy to Constantinople, where he remained until 1877.

[21] On the Gramont–Werther interview of the 14th: Werther's Tgs. of 9.35 P.M. (No. 212) and July 15, 1 A.M. (No. 222); and Gramont's account in his book, pp. 208–210. Hitherto this interview has always been placed about 11 A.M., on the basis of Gramont's statement; and it has been affirmed that the somewhat intimidating effect which the interview was supposed to have had upon Gramont was one of the chief reasons why on the afternoon of the 14th the French cabinet decided for peace (Fester, *ED.*, pp. 202, 203). This chronology needs, I think, to be revised. In his Tg. of 2.10 P.M. (No. 206) Werther reported that he had not yet been able to see Gramont. In that of 9.35 P.M. he declared that he had just come back from seeing him. Obviously the interview took place some time after the afternoon cabinet meeting in the Tuileries (1–6 P.M.), and before the one at St.-Cloud in the evening.

[22] Gramont, pp. 220, 221.

[23] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, ii, p. 330.

This plan was recommended to Berlin that afternoon through both Bernstorff and Loftus.[24]

Gramont has declared that this proposal was "skillfully conceived and perfectly formulated, and carried with it the germ of a peaceful solution." [25] Obviously, it would not be to Bismarck's taste. But the piquant feature of it, and one which has not hitherto been noticed, is that it placed King William in a very awkward position. For, as a matter of fact, he had already on the 13th communicated to Benedetti precisely that expression of his consent to, or approval of, Leopold's renunciation which was here in question. On the other hand, he had not ventured to confess the fact to Bismarck. And the secret could not now be divulged to Germany, after what had been said in the Ems Telegram, without destroying the authority of that document — and other lamentable consequences. To make the King's position still more painful, Lord Granville, seeking information as to the exact state of the case, had through Bernstorff sent a direct inquiry to Ems as to whether the King might not already have made a "communication to the French government regarding the Spanish candidacy." [26]

Abeken, knowing the facts, suggested that the answer should be left to Bismarck (who did not know them). But the King decided to send a reply which looks like nothing more than a sorry quibble. He protested that he had never "made a communication *of* the question of the Spanish candidacy to the French government." [27]

This rather undignified trick had meanwhile been rendered quite unnecessary, for Bismarck, without waiting to consult the King, had already emphatically denied both that his sovereign ever had made such a communication to France, and that he ever could — with arguments ranging from the state of German public opinion down to his old stock contention that no one had a right

[24] Bernstorff to Bismarck, Tg. of 4.35 P.M. (No. 210). Cf. Granville to Loftus, July 15 (*British Blue Book*, No. 49).

[25] Gramont, p. 199.

[26] Bernstorff to the King, Tg. of July 14, 3.10 P.M. (No. 208).

[27] William to Abeken, July 14 (15?) (No. 218). Abeken to Bernstorff, July 15, Tg. (No. 220).

to interfere with the King's private acts as head of the House of Hohenzollern.[28] Thus ended the only serious attempt at mediation made by any of the outside powers during this crisis.

In all probability, however, it was already too late to prevent the catastrophe. Not only because Bismarck since the 12th, at least, was bent upon war, but because by the evening of the 14th the French cabinet also had resolved to steer its wavering and ill-starred course in that direction. To understand that decision, a brief retrospect is necessary.

On the 12th of July, when the news of the renunciation reached Paris, Gramont and Ollivier in one case and Gramont and Napoleon in the other had committed France to two new projects for obtaining further satisfaction before the cabinet as a whole had had an opportunity to pass upon the new situation. On the morning of the 13th, the cabinet had then considered the hasty initiatives of the day before, and after prolonged debate had arrived at a somewhat vague decision to accept "any honorable compromise." Apparently, while allowing Benedetti to try to obtain "guarantees" if he could, they resolved not to insist upon them. They would have been satisfied if Leopold confirmed his father's act, if Spain accepted the renunciation, and if the King of Prussia gave it his approval[29] — all three of which conditions were shortly afterwards fulfilled.[30] Thus, it would seem that, had it not been for the Ems Telegram, the demand for guarantees would finally have been dropped,[31] and the conflict might have been avoided.[32] That afternoon Gramont made a non-committal

[28] Bismarck to Bernstorff, Tgs. of July 14, 10 P.M. (No. 213) and 11.55 P.M. (No. 217).

[29] This is the conclusion of Muret, *Revue d'histoire moderne* (1910), xiv, pp. 207–209, after balancing the conflicting assertions of Gramont, Ollivier, and La Gorce.

[30] After convincing herself of the authenticity of the renunciation, Spain accepted it on the 13th. Leopold, who got back to Sigmaringen on the 15th, at once confirmed his father's decision (see his letter to Prim of that day, No. 261).

[31] It is true that Gramont on the evening of the 13th still talked to Lord Lyons (*British Blue Book*, No. 41) and to Okunev (see No. 182) as if the demand for guarantees were a *sine qua non;* but this was pretty clearly contrary to the decision of the cabinet, and probably represented only Gramont's bungling effort to get British and Russian diplomatic support for that demand by his bluster.

[32] This statement does, however, involve the not small assumption that the French cabinet would have been able to restrain the strong war party at Paris.

statement in the Corps Législatif, which secured the adjournment of a final declaration by the government for two days, until Friday. In spite of the clamors of the war party and despite Benedetti's defeat at Ems, already known to his government by that evening, Ollivier declares that on the night of the 13th, for the first time since the crisis began, he enjoyed an untroubled rest, confident now that peace was assured.[33]

But in the morning all was changed. News had arrived of the sensational telegram in the German newspapers about the events at Ems, and from the first moment the French ministers regarded that telegram as a deliberate insult. Still, it was not clear that they ought to go to war over a mendacious communiqué to the newspapers, even though it emanated from the North German Foreign Office. All that afternoon the cabinet debated at the Tuileries; and, characteristically, first ordered the calling in of the reservists, and then decided for Napoleon's usual panacea, a congress of the powers. No one, however, was satisfied with this contradictory solution. Meanwhile, by that evening the Ems Telegram, embellished by popular fancy, was the talk of Paris, and the boulevards were the scene of the same wild demonstrations as Berlin had witnessed the night before. Hence, the ministers were hastily summoned out to St.-Cloud for another consultation.

Gramont arrived laden with bad news of all sorts: Werther's recall, King William's hasty return to Berlin, Bismarck's alarming language to Loftus of the previous day, and, above all, the fact that the Prussian envoys at various capitals were formally communicating the Ems Telegram to foreign governments, as if to flaunt before the eyes of all Europe the insult that Prussia claimed to have inflicted upon France. It was quite clearly this last piece of news that decided the issue. War was virtually resolved upon by about 11.30 that evening, and Ollivier and Gramont were charged to draft a declaration to the Chambers in that sense.

On the morning of the 15th, the cabinet met again to settle the final details. That afternoon Ollivier and Gramont appeared

[33] Ollivier, xiv, p. 354.

before the densely packed Chambers to present the government's manifesto, which, after a résumé of the situation scarcely more complete and honest than the Ems Telegram, ended with the demand for a vote of fifty million francs for immediate mobilization. In vain Thiers and a few other clear-headed deputies attempted to stem the tide, protesting that France had received all the satisfaction that was needed and that Benedetti's reports were more important than the lying accounts in the German newspapers. Ollivier declared that France had received a blow in the face, and must prepare to sustain the contest forced upon her. The Chambers howled for war, and the credits were voted, with (in the Corps Législatif) but ten dissenting voices.

While the irretrievable decision was thus being taken at Paris, King William on that day was journeying back to his capital, acclaimed at every town with immense and constantly growing ovations. Bismarck, in the meantime, was busily preparing for a rupture regarded as in any case inevitable. If France held back, if the Ems Telegram failed to stir the Gallic bull, he meant undoubtedly to revert to the plan of campaign outlined at the beginning of the supper party on July 13. One proof of this is his telegram to Munich on the afternoon of the 15th, in which he declared that in view of the state of public opinion Prussia would be obliged to go to war, unless France could offer guarantees of her future good behavior.[34] The international situation seemed excellent. With the possible exception of Denmark, Bismarck felt able to assert that not a single foreign power was likely to assist France,[35] not excluding Austria and Italy, on whose aid Napoleon had doubtless reckoned. It is interesting to note that he now addressed to Madrid the formal interpellation which Thile had already foreshadowed three days before, as to what attitude Prussia could expect from Spain in a war provoked by French interference in Spanish internal affairs.[36] For this is one more proof of the hope which he seems to have cherished from the time

[34] Tg. to Werthern, 6 P.M. (No. 232).

[35] Tg. to Canitz, July 15, 1.55 P.M. (No. 227).

[36] No. 227. Not having used the German documents after July 15, I am unable to state what the precise reply was; but there can be little doubt that it was thoroughly disappointing to Bismarck.

when he took up the Hohenzollern Candidacy, that, if it came to war, France would be caught between two fires. Bismarck was also actively engaged that day in whipping the still somewhat dubious South German states into line. Invitations were despatched to Bavaria and Württemberg to send their plenipotentiaries to Berlin to arrange at once for common military action.[37] All four of the southern states were urged to withdraw their representatives from Paris as soon as the North German embassy received its passports.[38] Already on the previous day a warning had been sent to Munich that any delay or doubts shown by Bavaria with regard to recognizing the *casus foederis* would be treated by Prussia as a rupture of the alliance.[39] These promptings and goadings were ultimately to produce the desired effect, though the final decision of the South to side with the North lies beyond the period of this narrative.

No news of any moment came through from Paris until evening, save for a somewhat vague telegram from Waldersee announcing the calling in of the French reserves.[40] These tidings sufficed, if indeed anything more was needed, to induce Bismarck to take with him, as he journeyed out to meet the King at Brandenburg, the orders for mobilization.[41] To wring from his sovereign consent to that decisive step was the last battle that remained to be fought.[42]

William was met at Brandenburg, then, by Bismarck, Moltke, Roon, and the Crown Prince. In the ensuing discussions as they travelled toward the capital, the King seems to have stood out against immediate action,insisting that a decision should be left to a ministerial council next day.[43] But on arriving at the station in

[37] Tg. of 1.30 P.M. (No. 226).

[38] Tg. of 3.10 P.M. (No. 229).

[39] Tg. to Werthern, July 14, 6.05 P.M. (No. 211).

[40] No. 221, received at Berlin at 11.18 A.M.

[41] Cf. his note under No. 221.

[42] As to the debates on the return trip from Brandenburg and the dénouement on the arrival at Berlin, see William's memorandum on the events of July 15 (No. 263), the Crown Prince's diary (Poschinger, *Kaiser Friedrich*, ii, p. 396), and Sybel, vii, pp. 260, 261, whose account was probably derived from Bismarck.

[43] William's own statement, partially confirmed by Sybel. The Crown Prince presents the matter somewhat differently.

Berlin about nine o'clock, Thile met them with sensational news from Paris: with a telegram from Werther reporting Gramont's manifesto in the Senate,[44] and a newspaper telegram announcing (what was not true) that the session of the Chambers had ended with a declaration of war upon Prussia.[45] Precisely what happened in the moment of excitement that followed, it is difficult to ascertain. Was it the King, or his son, or Bismarck — each of them has claimed the honor — who first declared that the only possible answer was immediate and complete mobilization? At all events, that decision was taken almost instantaneously, and shouted by the Crown Prince to the waiting crowds outside; whereupon, as was customary on such occasions, the royal father and son embraced each other with deep emotion.

William then rode slowly through densely packed streets and wildly cheering crowds — carriages aligned against carriages; pavements, sidewalks, and windows full; with myriads of waving handkerchiefs, and songs, hurrahs, and ovations without end — to the palace. Shortly after, the orders for mobilization were signed. After showing himself again and again at the window to the insatiable crowds, the King went happily to rest, at the close of what he calls "this most decisive of days for the future of the Fatherland."

There is no need to recount here the ensuing meeting of the Bundesrat and the Reichstag, or the feeble efforts made at the eleventh hour by England and Russia to avert a breach. All was settled by the 15th, and henceforth there was no sign of wavering either in France or in Prussia.

On the 19th of July the French declaration of war was presented at Berlin.

[44] No. 230.

[45] No. 234. There has been much confusion in earlier works as to just what was the news that greeted the King at Berlin and precipitated his final decision. His own statement, written many months later, does not seem to me very reliable on this and on various other questions.

DOCUMENTS FROM THE GERMAN ARCHIVES

DOCUMENTS FROM THE GERMAN ARCHIVES

No. 1

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER at Varzin and to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN at Ems.[1] *Tg. Cph.*

(Kz) No. 1109 to Varzin, No. 175 to Ems Berlin, July 4, 1870

Sent to Varzin 2.35 P.M. Rec. 2.50 P.M.

Sent to Ems 3.26 P.M. Rec. 4.15 P.M.

Der französische Geschäftsträger sagt mir soeben, er sei aus Paris benachrichtigt, dass Marschall Prim, seiner eigenen Erklärung gemäss, durch eine Deputation dem Prinzen von Hohenzollern die spanische Krone angeboten und letzterer dieselbe angenommen habe. Der Eindruck dieser Nachricht auf das französische Cabinet sei ein ungünstiger, und er sei beauftragt, mich zu fragen, ob das preussische Gouvernement bei der Sache betheiligt sei. Ich habe ihm geantwortet, dass die Angelegenheit *für das preussische Gouvernement nicht existire*,[2] und ich ihm über etwaige Verhandlungen des Marschall Prim mit dem Fürsten Auskunft zu ertheilen nicht in der Lage sei.[3]

(To Bucher only.) Ich bitte um Belehrung, ob diese meine Erklärung den Intentionen des Herrn Chefs entspricht, und wenn dies der Fall ist, ob ich Canitz telegraphiren soll, damit er eventuell übereinstimmend sich äussere.

(To Abeken only.) Ich habe diese Ausdruckweise [*sic*] dem französischen Geschäftsträger gegenüber gewählt, weil sie dem vom Hrn. Bundeskanzler bisher festgehaltenen Standpunkt entspricht, doch theile ich ihm das Vorstehende telegraphisch mit, um, wenn er meine Aeusserung billigt, Canitz zu eventueller analoger Sprache telegraphisch anzuweisen.[4]

[1] Bucher was then serving with Bismarck at Varzin, and Abeken with the King at Ems.

(Marginal notes by King William): [2] *Richtig.* [3] *Ganz richtig.* [4] *Sollte Gf. Brk. anderer Ansicht sein, so ist Canitz* nicht eher *zu instruiren, als bis ich Gf. Bismarcks Ansicht kenne.*

No. 2

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2053 Paris, July 4, 1870
Sent 4.35 P.M. Rec. at Berlin 6.40 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Dans le ministère on est ému de la soidisante nouvelle que le Prince de Hohenzollern Léopold aurait accepté la couronne d'Espagne offerte par Prim. Le duc de Gramont a télégraphié à Berlin pour savoir ce qui en est. Cette combinaison fait craindre ici guerre civile en Espagne et contrarie parce que candidat préféré du ministère français pour le trône d'Espagne est le Prince Alphonse.

No. 3

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2056 Paris, July 4, 1870
Sent 7.50 P.M. Rec. at Berlin 10.30 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Ich reise morgen Abend nach Ems ab, um Sr. Majestät dem Könige aufzuwarten und bringe die *allerbedenklichsten* Eindrücke von Herzog von Gramont und Ollivier über die Hohenzollernsche Combination für spanischen Thron mit und halte es für erwünscht, darüber Seiner Majestät direct Vortrag halten zu können.

No. 4

BISMARCK to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2054 Varzin, July 4, 1870
Sent 9.47 P.M. Rec. 10.40 P.M.

Ganz einverstanden.[1] Ich finde die Anfrage des Franzosen sehr dreist und würde vorschlagen bei Wiederholung um Formulirung seiner Frage Behufs Einholung der Befehle Seiner Majestät über die Antwort zu bitten.

[1] See No. 1.

No. 5

LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2055 Varzin, July 4, 1870

Sent 10 P.M. Rec. 10.50 P.M.

Graf Bismarck bittet, Frh. v. Werther von der Interpellation zu benachrichtigen und zu beauftragen, unsere Ueberraschung auszudrücken und zu sagen, der Prinz wie die spanische Regierung seien Herren ihres Willens.[1]

No. 6

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2057 Ems, July 5, 1870

Sent 6.40 A.M. Rec. 8.20 A.M.

Seine Majestät, Allerhöchstwelchem ich Ihr Telegramm[2] sofort vorgelegt, ist ganz mit der von Ew. Excellenz gegebenen Antwort einverstanden und bemerkt, dass ausser dem in Ihrem Telegramm genannten Freiherrn von Canitz auch Freiherrn von Werther, dessen Telegramm[3] auch hier angekommen, in analoger Weise zu instruiren sein würde. Ich telegraphire nicht von hier an ihn, weil es mir nicht zu schaden scheint, wenn er noch eine Weile gar nicht unterrichtet ist. Graf Waldersee hat Freiherrn von Werther *hier* auf Mittwoch früh angekündigt.

No. 7

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN at Ems.

Tg. Cph.

No. 179 Ems Berlin, July 5, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 9.50 A.M. Sent 10.17 A.M. Rec. 12.35 P.M.

Graf von Bismarck mit meiner Antwort an Lesourd völlig einverstanden, findet die Anfrage des Franzosen sehr dreist und

[1] This order was carried out by a telegram (Kz. No. 19) from Thile to Werther, sent at 9.20 A.M., July 5.

[2] See No. 1. [3] See No. 2.

lässt Freiherrn von Werther beauftragen unsere Ueberraschung auszudrücken und zu sagen, der Prinz wie die spanische Regierung seien Herren ihres Willens.

Des Freiherrn von Werthers gestriges Telegramm No. 38[1] theile ich nach Varzin mit.[2]

No. 8

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the FOREIGN OFFICE. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2075 Ems, July 5, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 10 A.M. Sent 11.12 A.M. Rec. 2.50 P.M.

Heute Nacht auch Frh. v. Werther's zweites Telegramm mit den Bedenklichkeiten und der *Anmeldung* des Vortrags bei Sr. Majestät erhalten.[3] Ich gestatte mir ganz gehorsamst anheimzustellen, ob Eure Excellenz Frh. v. Werther nicht noch heute *vor* Abreise von Paris telegraphisch von der Sachlage und Graf Bismarck's Standpunkt unterrichten wollen, damit er wisse, dass es *für uns* fait accompli ist und *wir* nicht mehr zurück können, *am wenigsten* vor französischen Drohungen, und damit er sich nicht zu sehr mit Graf Bismarck in Opposition setzt und Seine Majestät den König ohne Nützen ängstigt.

No. 9

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to BARON VON CANITZ, Envoy at Madrid. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2057, 2058 Berlin, July 5, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 11.40 A.M.

Die Nachricht von der Annahme des Prinzen hat in Paris grosse Sensation gemacht und der französische Geschäftsträger hat mich über unsere Stellung zur Sache befragt. Wir finden diese Anfrage sehr dreist. Unsere trockene Antwort lautet dahin, dass für das preussische Cabinet *als solches* die gedachte Angelegenheit nicht existire und dass das spanische Volk und der

[1] No. 3 above.

[2] The King's marginal comment: *Darauf ist nun also die Ambassade in Paris zu instruiren, da Werther heute Nacht schon unterwegs hierher ist.*

[3] See No. 3.

Prinz von Hohenzollern Herren ihres Willens seien. Ew. Exc. wollen sich vorkommenden Falls analog und mit Festigkeit gegenüber der französischen Diplomatie äussern, jedoch keine Erörterung provociren.

No. 10

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER at Varzin. *Tg. Cph.*
(Kt) No. 1 Berlin, July 5, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 11.20 A.M.

(Reports the instructions sent to Canitz and the King's approval of his reply to Le Sourd.)

Wegen Werthers Reise nach Ems bemerke ich auch, dass diese auf Allerh. Ermächtigung schon festgesetzt war, ehe die französische Antwort geschah.[1]

No. 11

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to KING WILLIAM.
No. A 2086 Paris, July 5, 1870[2]

Nachdem der Herzog von Gramont und ich uns gestern im Besuchen verfehlt hatten, hatte er bei mir die Notiz zuruckgelassen, dass er mich noch vor meiner angezeigten Abreise nach Ems zu sehen wünschte. Ich habe ihn daher noch gestern Abend aufgesucht[3] und fand bei ihm den Justizminister Ollivier.

Sowohl derselbe als auch der Herzog von Gramont bemerkten mir, sie könnten mir nicht verhehlen, wie die gerade eingetroffene Nachricht, dass der General Prim durch eine Deputation dem Erbprinzen Leopold von Hohenzollern die spanische Krone angeboten und dieselbe von letzterem angenommen sei, einen höchst peinlichen Eindruck auf die französische Regierung hervorgebracht. Der Kaiser Napoleon wäre davon so emotionirt, dass er gesagt, er würde selbst den Herzog von Montpensier einem Hohenzollernschen Prinzen für den spanischen Thron vorziehen.

[1] In the margin a penciled question-mark, presumably by Bismarck.

[2] A note at the head of this report says: *Vom H. v. Verther selbst mit nach Ems genommen, und dort am 6. Juli ubergeben.*

[3] Underlined in pencil, presumably by the King.

Dieses Factum beweise genügend, wie tief diese Combination hier ressentirt würde. Man wisse nicht, ob das Königliche Cabinet in diese Verhandlung initiirt; doch würde dieses die öffentliche Meinung gewiss glauben. Man würde daher aus der Geheimhaltung dieser Verhandlung nicht nur ein unfreundliches procédé von Seiten Spaniens (Gl. Prim), sondern besonders von Seiten Preussens erblicken. Hier wünsche man aufrichtig gute und freundliche Beziehungen zu Preussen; doch wäre die unzweifelhafte Befürchtung vorhanden, dass ein Hohenzoller auf dem spanischen Thron diese Beziehungen alteriren müsste. Dieses Ereigniss, wenn es eine vollendete Thatsache werden sollte, wäre dazu angethan, die Fortdauer des Friedens zu compromittiren. Es wäre mehr als die hiesige öffentliche Meinung vertragen könnte, und auf die Dauer wäre der Kaiser Napoleon nicht im Stande, im Widerspruch mit derselben eine solche Lösung der spanischen Frage zugeben zu können. Beide Minister rechneten auf die Weisheit Ew. M., welche schliesslich zu einer solchen Combination nicht Allerhöchst-Ihre Zustimmung geben würde; sie meinten, Ew. Kgl. Majestät würden dadurch für die Befestigung des Friedens eine solche Einwirkung ausüben, dass dieselbe grade für die guten Beziehungen zwischen Preussen und Frankreich die erspriesslichsten Folgen haben könnte.

Sowohl der Herzog v. Gramont als auch Herr Ollivier sahen es als sehr erwünscht an, dass ich bei meiner schon seit mehreren Tagen projectirten Abreise nach Ems in der Lage wäre, die Eindrücke, die besagtes Ereigniss hier hervorgebracht, Ew. K. M. vortragen zu können.

Dass die Angelegenheit keinem Zweifel mehr unterworfen, hat das Kaiserliche Ministerium gestern durch ein Telegramm aus Madrid erfahren, indem der General Prim dem französischen Botschafter von der vollendeten Thatsache des Anerbietens des spanischen Throns an den Prinzen Leopold von Hohenzollern und von dessen Bereitwilligkeit zur Annahme Kenntniss gegeben hat.

An sich glaubt der Herzog von Gramont nicht, dass ein Prinz von Hohenzollern sich länger als 6 Monate auf dem spanischen

Throne halten würde. Bürgerkrieg, Coalition der verschiedenen Parteien würden ihn davon vertreiben.

Die gestrigen Abend- und heutigen Morgen-Zeitungen enthalten sämmtlich den Ausdruck der Verstimmung über besagte Nachricht. Auch sagte mir Herr Ollivier, ich hätte keinen Begriff, welche Emotion dieselbe auf die parlamentarischen Kreise (er kam grade aus der Kammer) hervorgebracht; sie erblickten darin eine eclatante Niederlage für das Kaiserreich.

Ich könnte den beiden Ministern nur sagen, dass mir von dieser ganzen Combination auch nicht das Geringste bekannt wäre, und im Uebrigen würde ich die Eindrücke, welche sie mir schilderten, zur Kenntniss Ew. Kgl. Majestät bringen.

Aus der Aeusserung beider Minister ging klar hervor, dass, wenn die französische Regierung für die innern Fragen Spaniens das Princip der Nichtintervention beobachtet, dass der Prinz Alphons von Asturien der hier erwünschte Candidat für den spanischen Thron bleibt, und nach ihrer Meinung hätte er die meisten Chancen, dass dessen Wahl in Spanien mit der Zeit die grösste Beistimmung finden würde.

No. 12

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2078 Paris, July 5, 1870

Sent 5.05 P.M. Rec. 7.10 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Au moment du départ pour Ems reçu télégramme No. 19.[1] M. Ollivier vient de me voir et il m'a fait observer que l'ambassadeur de France à Madrid mande que général Prim lui avait dit: "On nous a offert la candidature du Prince de Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen sans que nous l'ayons demandée."

[1] A telegram sent him at 9.20 A.M., in which Thile had informed him of his reply to Le Sourd and of Bismarck's approval of it.

No. 13

LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2077 Varzin, July 5, 1870

Sent 5.45 P.M. Rec. 8.10 P.M.

An Geh. Rath Abeken eben telegraphirt:[1]

"Wenn Frankreich Fragen, die nur Spanien angehen, uns gegenüber anregt, so hätte Frh. v. Werther deren Erörterung ablehnen und nach Madrid und Reichenhall verweisen sollen. Die Selbständigkeit Spaniens achtend, und ohne Beruf zur Einmischung in spanische Verfassungsfragen, überlassen wir die letzteren den Spaniern und denen, die es werden wollen. Will Frankreich auf dieselben einwirken, so ist das seine und nicht unsere Sache. Annahme der Besprechung würde unsere sonst unangreifbare Position verschlechtern. Vor allen Dingen ist zu verhüten, dass Freiherr von Werther den Eindruck macht, als ob er oder gar wir einzuschüchtern wären. Seine Reise nach Ems wird diesen falschen Eindruck machen."

Falls andere Zeitungen die Sache besprechen, empfiehlt Graf Bismarck zunächst Variationen über den zweiten Satz des vorstehenden Telegramms an Geh. Rath Abeken etwa in der Kölnischen zu geben. An Prinz Reuss bittet er ähnliche Mittheilung wie an Frh. v. Werther.

No. 14

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN at Ems.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2075 Berlin, July 5, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 7 P.M.

Ihrem Telegramm No. 9[2] durch das meinige von heute früh an Werther, das vor 9 Uhr früh abgegangen, im wesentlichen entsprochen. Bitte Werther auch noch mündlich in meinem Namen den Standpunkt des Chefs darzulegen und ihm begreiflich zu

[1] By a telegram, signed "Bismarck," sent the same afternoon at 3 P.M.

[2] See No. 6 above.

machen, dass *jetzt* zuruckzuweichen nicht allein unwürdig, sondern auch höchst gefährlich wäre. Aehnlich habe ich mich brieflich gegen I. M. die Königin geäussert, welche sehr beunruhigt ist.

No. 15

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the ROYAL EMBASSY at Paris. *Tg. Cph.*
(Kz) No. 20 Ems, July 5, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 7.45 P.M.

Wenn Baron Werther noch nicht abgereist sein sollte, so giebt Se. Majestät zu bedenken, ob seine Reise hierher in diesem Augenblick den falschen Eindruck machen könnte, als sei sie durch die Bemerkungen der französischen Minister über die spanische Angelegenheit *veranlasst*. Das Zusammentreffen der Reise des Botschafters hiemit ist unangenehm, weil vor Allem der Eindruck vermieden werden muss, als liessen wir uns einschüchtern.[1]

No. 16

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN at Ems.
No. 189 Ems Varzin, July 5, 1870

Euer Hochwohlgeboren theile ich zur Benutzung bei dem Immediatvortrage einige Ansichten über die Behandlung der spanischen Frage mit. Meines Erachtens hätte Herr von Werther jede Besprechung der Sache, als einer ihm und seiner Regierung fremden, von sich abweisen sollen. Dass er nach Ems gegangen, muss von uns als eine gefällige Bereitwilligkeit, sich zu informiren und der befreundeten französischen Regierung möglichst rasch die zugängliche Aufklärung zu verschaffen, geltend gemacht werden, und es muss vor allen Dingen verhütet werden, dass diese Reise des Königlichen Botschafters etwa den Anschein gewinne, als sei sie ein Ergebniss der "*allerbedenklichsten* Eindrücke von Gramont und Ollivier." Die feste und furchtlose Haltung, welche wir bisher jeder Pariser Beunruhigung gegenüber gestellt haben, ist die wesentlichste Potenz, der wir die Erhaltung

[1] At the head of this telegram stand the words, in Abeken's handwriting: *Nach gehaltenem Vortrage bei Sr. Majestät.*

des Friedens verdanken. Frankreich fürchtet sich vor ernstem Bruch meines Erachtens mehr als wir; lassen wir aber dem Glauben Raum, dass *wir* uns mehr fürchten, so wird die französische Ueberhebung uns sehr bald keine andere Wahl lassen als den Krieg. Wenn ich mir das ganze spanische Verhältniss nach Schweden übertragen denke, einem Lande welches auf uns etwa so nahe Rückwirkung haben kann wie Spanien auf Frankreich, wenn in Schweden, wie früher Bernadotte, jetzt Murat gewählt würde, so frage ich mich, in welchem Masse würde Frankreich sich etwa um unsere Eindrücke bezüglich dieser Wahl, auch wenn sie die allerbedenklichsten wären, beunruhigen und wie würde eine Interpellation, welche wir darüber an die französische Regierung richten wollten, in Paris aufgenommen werden?

Da die Reise des Herrn v. Werther nicht zu hindern sein wird, so erlaube ich mir, für seine Instruirung einige Vorschläge zu machen. Er sollte, vor allen Dingen, wie schon gesagt, seiner Reise als eine Gefälligkeit gegen die französische Regierung verwerthen, der er sich unterzogen um letzterer über die Lage der spanischen Frage so viel Information zu verschaffen wie er selbst zu erlangen im Stande sein werde. Und diese Information hätte er, meiner Ansicht nach, in der Hauptsache der *Wirklichkeit* entsprechend dahin zu geben: dass S. M. der König nach erhaltener Kenntniss von den Absichten der spanischen Regierung jede Einmischung durch Einwirking auf einen Prinzen abgelehnt habe, auch bis vor Kurzem Grund gehabt habe zu glauben, dass keiner der Hohenzollernschen Prinzen sich zur Annahme der spanischen Krone verstehen werde; dass, wenn hierin bei diesen Herren eine Sinnesänderung eingetreten sein sollte, S. M. die Motive derselben nicht kenne und deshalb nicht zu würdigen vermöge; dass die Nachricht von einer spanischen Deputation, welche sich zu dem Prinzen begeben solle, S. M. erst aus der Havasschen Correspondenz bekannt geworden sei, und dass die Aufnahme, welche diese Deputation an ihrem Bestimmungsorte finden werde, S. M. bisher unbekannt sei (wie ich voraussetze). Diese Darlegung stimmt genau mit den Thatsachen. Sollte (worüber Havas und der französische Geschäftsträger in Berlin divergiren) wirklich eine solche Deputation unterwegs sein, so

würde dieser von dem Ministerium in Abwesenheit der Cortes gethane Schritt vielleicht eine uns unerwartete Rückwirkung der Proklamirung des neuen Königs Alphons darstellen. Wir hätten bisher geglaubt, dass ohne Wahl der Cortes Schritte der Art nicht erfolgen könnten und dass deshalb die Frage bis zum November vertagt sei. Von einer Deputation, die bereits in Deutschland gewesen sei, wüssten wir nichts.

Wenn in Spanien wirklich eine Königswahl zu Stande komme, so habe diese Angelegenheit für Preussen kein Interesse ersten Ranges; und wir hätten auch nicht geglaubt, dass Frankreich die Absicht hege, eine Einwirkung auf die inneren spanischen Angelegenheiten zu üben, da die Folgen einer solchen erfahrungsmässig für das *Nachbarland*, von dem die Einwirkung ausgegangen, sich unbequem fühlbar zu machen pflegten. Unserer Ansicht nach wären zwei von den in Spanien möglichen Eventualitäten für Frankreich unwillkommen gewesen: die Republik und Montpensier; und hätten wir geglaubt, dass das französische Interesse in Bekämpfung dieser beiden sich begrenzen werde. Wir wären indessen nicht berufen letzeres zu beurtheilen und würden unsere Beziehungen zu Frankreich in keiner Weise davon abhängig machen, ob Frankreich auch noch gegen anderweitige spanische Throncandidaturen seinen Einfluss geltend zu machen für zweckmässig halte. Ich für meinen Theil würde geglaubt haben, dass gerade ein Prinz aus der dem Kaiserlichen Hause dem Grade nach näher als dem Königl. Preussischen verwandten Familie des Fürsten von Hohenzollern den französischen Interessen bequemer sein könne als irgend ein Mitglied der einheimischen Bourbons, deren Herrschaft entweder mit clericalem Absolutismus oder mit der Republik endigen müsste und welche, einmal wieder auf dem Thron, zu einem freundlichen und nachbarlichen Verhältniss mit Frankreich und selbst für einen legitimen Einfluss letzterer Macht weniger Anknüpfung bieten würde als eine neue Dynastie. Indessen würde das Kaiserliche Cabinet selbst das sicherste Urtheil über seine Stellung zu Spanien haben, nur möge es uns in Bezug auf dieselbe ausser Spiel lassen. Alles was der König rechtlich und politisch in der Sache thun könne, bestehe in einer abrathenden Einwirkung, welche bereits früher erfolgt

sei; über dieselbe hinaus in die Entschliessungen eines noch so hoch gestellten Unterthanen einzugreifen würde dem Selbstgefühl des Königs und der Verfassung des Landes nicht entsprechen. Wolle das französische Cabinet in Verfolgung seiner eigenthümlichen Ansichten über die Interessen Frankreichs bezüglich Spaniens Einfluss auf die dortige Königswahl ausüben, so möge es der spanischen Regierung in Madrid oder dem betheiligten Throncandidaten die Gründe darlegen, welche eine dieser beiden allein interessirten Parteien den Absichten Frankreichs geneigt zu machen geeignet sein würden.

Sobald wir diese Linie in unserer Stellung zur Sache überschreiten, sobald wir, auch nur stillschweigend, zugeben, dass Frankreich ein Recht habe, *uns* über diese spanische Angelegenheit zur Rede zu stellen, sobald wir durchblicken lassen, dass wir uns über die Eindrücke Gramonts und Olliviers, welche beide dem Character nach Gascogner sind, wenn auch nur Gramont von Geburt, im allermindesten beunruhigt zeigen, so würden wir, m. E., in eine sehr fehlerhafte Situation gerathen, welche nur mit einem Rückschlage der öffentlichen Meinung zu unserm Nachtheil und mit einer Ermuthigung Frankreichs uns gegenüber endigen könnte und unsere Fähigkeit mit Frankreich in Frieden zu leben sehr beeinträchtigen würde. Also vor allen Dingen rathe ich, H. v. Werther mit der Instruction zu versehen, dass er kühle Verwunderung über die Unruhe, welche Frankreich *uns* gegenüber zeigt, in Paris an den Tag lege.

No. 17

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to PRINCE REUSS, Envoy at St. Petersburg. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2077 Berlin, July 6, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station at 11.30 A.M.

Informs him of Le Sourd's query and his reply, as in No. 1.

No. 18

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the ROYAL EMBASSY at Paris. *Tg. Cph.*
(Kz) No. 21 Ems, July 6, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 12.10 P.M.

Graf Bismarck telegraphiert von Varzin hierher:[1] "Wenn Frankreich Fragen, die nur Spanien angehen, uns gegenüber anregt, so muss die Botschaft deren Erörterung ablehnen und nach Madrid und an die Betreffenden verweisen. Die Selbständigkeit Spaniens achtend und ohne Beruf zur Einmischung in spanische Verfassungsfragen, überlassen wir die letzteren den Spaniern und denen, die es werden wollen. Will Frankreich auf dieselben einwirken, so ist das seine und nicht unsere Sache. Keine Besprechung anzunehmen. Vor allen Dingen der Eindruck zu verhüten als ob wir einzuschüchtern wären." Soweit Graf Bismarck. Se. Majestät der König hiemit ganz einverstanden. Ich setze hinzu, dass die Behauptung, die Hohenzollernsche Candidatur sei den Spaniern von uns oder den Hohenzollern angeboten, eine *absolute Unwahrheit ist.*

No. 19

LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State.
Tg. Cph.
No. A 2080 Varzin, July 6, 1870
Sent 12.15 P.M. Rec. 2.20 P.M.

Nachstehendes an Geheimrath Abeken abgegangen: "Freiherr v. Werther muss vermeiden in Paris Advokatur für des Erbprinzen Candidatur zu übernehmen; sonst wird letztere aus einer persönlichen zu einer amtlich preussischen. Der Erbprinz müsste von der Stimmung des französischen Cabinets unterrichtet werden und sich in Paris Vertrauen zu erwerben suchen, damit er womöglich verhüte dass man von daher sofort Geld und Einfluss Frankreichs auf Verschwörungen in der spanischen Armee verwendet. Geht Prim wirklich nach Vichy, so thut er das ver-

[1] See No. 13.

muthlich in analogischer Absicht." Graf Bismarck bittet, dieses Telegramm Seiner Königlichen Hoheit dem Kronprinzen mitzutheilen.

No. 20

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to BARON VON CANITZ, Envoy at Madrid. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2078 Berlin, July 6, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station at 1.30 P.M.

Nach einer uns zugekommenen Nachricht sollte Marschall Prim dem französischen Botschafter gesagt haben: "Die Hohenzollernsche Candidatur ist uns angeboten worden, ohne dass wir sie verlangt haben." Wir halten dies für ein grobes Missverständniss oder eine böswillige Erfindung.

Vorstehendes für jetzt *nur* zu Ihrer eigenen Information.

Haben Sie mein gestriges Telegr. No. 4 [1] nicht erhalten?

Unser Standpunkt bleibt der darin bezeichnete. Die Selbständigkeit Spaniens achtend und ohne Beruf zur Einmischung in spanische Verfassungsfragen, überlassen wir die letzteren den Spaniern und denen die es werden wollen.

No. 21

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to Bismarck. *Tg. Cph.*
(Kt) No. 1 Ems, July 6, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station at 3 P.M.

Freiherr von Werther heut hier eingetroffen; war schon, ehe Ihr Telegramm [2] hier ankam, von Paris abgereist, wo er seine Reise schon seit 8 Tagen angekündigt hatte. Dort hatte er sich einstweilen auf eigene völlige Unwissenheit zurückgezogen. Ungeachtet der starken französischen Aeusserungen macht er mir nicht den Eindruck persönlicher Einschüchterung, verspricht mir auch den König nicht zu ängstigen. Die Botschaft in Paris ist genau nach Ihren Telegrammen, mit denen Se. Majestät vollkommen einverstanden, instruirt.

[1] See No. 9. [2] See No. 13.

No. 22

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2082 Paris, July 6, 1870

Sent 5.40 P.M. Rec. 8.30 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Le Duc de Gramont vient de répondre au Corps législatif à l'interpellation sur la candidature du Prince de Hohenzollern.

Okouneff [1] a assisté à la séance et dit que la déclaration du Duc de Gramont a été très raide, amicale pour l'Espagne, peu aimable pour nous. Elle a été suivie d'une explosion d'applaudissements frénétiques. Okouneff n'a jamais vu la Chambre dans un pareil état d'excitation, lui et Lord Lyons [2] en ont été alarmés.

No. 23

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to KING WILLIAM. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2083 London, July 6, 1870

Sent 7.45 P.M. Rec. at Ems July 7, 12.10 A.M. (Duplicate to Berlin.) [3]

Die Nachrichten aus Paris lauten sehr alarmant in Betreff der eventuellen Wahl des Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern zum König von Spanien. Lord Lyons telegraphirt, dass dieselbe der französischen Regierung im höchsten Grade unangenehm sein würde, und dass Freiherr von Werther nach Ems gegangen sei, um Eurer Majestät die Gefahr der Lage darzulegen und von Allerhöchstdemselben das Verbot der Annahme zu erlangen.

Rothschildsche Berichte stellen den Krieg gegen Preussen als unvermeidlich dar, wenn der Prinz annimmt. Die englische Presse ist bis jetzt dem Project nicht günstig, und auf dem Auswärtigen Amt scheint man Frankreichs Empfindlichkeit gerechtfertigt zu finden, während man glaubt, dass Preussen kein Interesse habe, sich die Solidarität für einen zweiten prekären Thron eines Hohenzollernschen Prinzen aufzubürden, dessen

[1] Russian chargé at Paris. [2] British ambassador at Paris.

[3] The telegram sent to Berlin, which contained some unimportant variations from that sent to Ems, has been printed by Kurt Rheindorf, *England und der deutsch-französische Krieg 1870–71*, pp. 161, 162.

Candidatur unter der Bevölkerung von Madrid wegen der Muratschen Reminiscenzen von 1809 höchst unpopulär sei.

Ich meinerseits leugne überhaupt jede Kenntniss des Plans, bestreite aber entschieden das Recht Frankreichs Deutschland zu bekriegen, weil Spanien sich einen Prinzen von Hohenzollern zum Könige wählt.

Lord Granville übernimmt heute die Siegel des Ministeriums in Windsor, und empfängt uns morgen, daher ich ihn seit Eingang dieser Nachrichten nicht gesehen.

No. 24

LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2084 Varzin, July 6, 1870

Sent 10 P.M. Rec. July 7, 5.30 A.M.

An Geheimrat Abeken telegraphirt:

"Bitte Frh. v. Werther zu sagen, dass der objective Inhalt seines Telegramms No. 39[1] höchst unwahrscheinlich. Nach Prim's bisheriger Haltung ist kaum möglich, dass er die ihm von Ollivier in den Mund gelegte Aeusserung gethan habe, französische Erfindung dagegen jederzeit wahrscheinlich."

No. 25

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER.

Tg. Cph.

(Kt) No. 30 Berlin, July 6, 1870

(Time of sending and reception not given.)

Herr v. Werther nach Ems abgereist. Graf Solms meldet, dass nach den Informationen des "Constitutionnel" das französische Gouvernement die Thronbesteigung des Prinzen von Hohenzollern als einen échec und eine Drohung für die französische Politik ansehe. Man wäre entschieden sich Prim's Projecten energisch zu widersetzen.[2]

[1] See No. 12.

[2] This summarizes a telegram from Solms, sent that afternoon at 1.05 and received at Berlin at 3.20.

No. 26

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2082, 2083 Berlin, July 7, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 9.15 A.M.

(Transmits Solms's and Bernstorff's telegrams of the day before, Nos. 22 and 23.)

No. 27

BARON VON CANITZ, Envoy at Madrid, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*

No. 2098 Madrid, July 7, 1870

Sent 11.20 A.M. Rec. at Berlin 6.00 P.M.

In einer vorgestern in Lagranja gehaltenen Ministersitzung wurde die Hohenzollernsche Candidatur einstimmig angenommen und beschlossen, die Berufung der Cortes zur Königswahl für den 18ten oder 20ten dieses Monats zu veranlassen.

No. 28

LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2100 Varzin, July 7, 1870

Sent 11.45 A.M. Rec. 2.55 P.M.

Presse. Herzog von Gramont's Antwort auf Cochery's Interpellation möchte im Sinne hiesigen Telegramms vom 5ten [1] besprochen und gefragt werden, was die Sache das deutsche Volk angehe.

No. 29

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2083 Berlin, July 7, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 11.45 A.M.

(Gives him the same brief statement of the attitude of the Prussian government as had previously been sent to Canitz and Reuss.[2])

[1] See No. 13. [2] See Nos. 9 and 17.

No. 30

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2097 Ems, July 7, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 12.10 P.M. Sent 12.56 P.M. Rec. 4.16 P.M.

Seine Majestät wünscht, dass das ganze Material über die französische Auffassung, auch was ich gestern an Sie über Freiherrn von Werthers mündliche Berichterstattung schrieb,[1] schleunigst zu Graf von Bismarcks Kenntniss komme. Ollivier war so weit gegangen, das Schicksal Maximilians für den Prinzen in Ansicht zu stellen; eine Demüthigung, wie Hohenzollernsche Herrschaft in Spanien, könne und würde das Kaiserthum nicht ertragen. Freiherr von Werther sieht selbst ein, dass wir nicht *zurück* können, dass der König die gegebene Erlaubniss *nicht* zurücknehmen könne, glaubt übrigens mit mir, dass Frankreich schon in der Lage sei, die Wahl selbst zu verhindern.

No. 31

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2096 Paris, July 7, 1870
Sent 1.05 P.M. Rec. at Berlin, 3.23 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

(Gives the text of Gramont's well-known declaration before the Corps Législatif on July 6.[2])

[1] It is uncertain what Abeken is here referring to.

[2] This telegram was forwarded to Varzin (July 7 or 8? Cf. No. 52), and the copy received there contains some interesting marginalia in Bismarck's hand:

Die Sprache ist doch sehr roh! Das kommt davon, wenn man solche Leute zu Ministern macht; spricht nur parti pris aus.

(Opposite the phrase, "Négociation qui nous a été cachée"): *Haben die Franzosen uns etwa* ihre *Absichten mitgetheilt? Wir hatten* fremde *Geheimnisse zu wahren, für die Prim Schweigen verlangt hatte.*

(Opposite the phrase "qu'une puissance étrangère en plaçant un de ses princes sur le trône de Charles Quint," etc.): *Nicht wir, sondern die Cortez wählen den König für Spanien et le placent sur le trône.*

No. 32

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER and to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2088 Berlin, July 7, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 1.15 P.M.

Rascon [1] übergiebt mir eben ein Telegramm en clair aus Madrid von gestern, was die den Cortes am 20. vorzuschlagende Königswahl in sehr angemessener Weise anzeigt, wesentlich übereinstimmend mit den neusten [*sic*] Zeitungstelegrammen. Ich sende Uebersetzung mit heutiger Post. Zugleich theilte mir Rascon aus einer chiffrirten Depesche mit, dass man in Madrid durch Ausbeutung der aufregenden Pariser Zeitungsartikel sofort eine momentane Baisse an der Börse erzeugt habe, wobei die Agenten Napoleon's und Montpensier's wohl zusammengewirkt haben möchten. Die spanische Regierung sei aber gleichwohl des guten Erfolges sicher. Rascon versicherte, das spanische Selbstgefühl werde, durch die unbefugte französische Einmischung verletzt, um so kräftiger hervortreten.

Ueber unsere zurückhaltende Stellung, die ich ihm kurz entwickelte, war er sehr erfreut.

(To Varzin alone.) Gramonts Rede nach dem Wolfschen Telegramm telegraphire ich gleichzeitig en clair.

No. 33

LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2104 Varzin, July 7, 1870

Sent 1.50 P.M. Rec. 7.30 P.M.

Für Dr. Busch.[2]

In officiöser Presse andeuten, dass Besprechung spanischer Thronfrage verfrüht erscheine, so lange die Cortes in dieser von ihnen allein abhängigen Sache nicht für . . . [Illegible passage].

[1] Spanish envoy at Berlin.

[2] Dr. Moritz Busch, the well-known press agent of the Berlin Foreign Office. Cf. Busch, *Tagebuchblätter*, i, pp. 31, 32, where the substance of this telegram is given.

Die deutschen Regierungen hätten Spaniens Selbständigkeit jederzeit geachtet, würden das auch ferner, seien ohne Beruf, ohne Recht zur Einmischung.

In nicht officiösen Blättern Staunen über französische Kammerverhandlung; als ob dort über spanischen Thron zu verfügen sei. Empfindlich für spanischen Stolz, förderlich für spanische Republik, neuer Beweis, auf welche Abwege das persönliche Regiment führt. Will Eugénie einen neuen *Spanischen Erbfolge-Krieg?*

No. 34

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to KING WILLIAM and to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2103 London, July 7, 1870

Sent 5.50 P.M. Rec. at Berlin 11.45 P.M.[1]

Die drohende Sprache des Herzogs von Gramont gegen Preussen macht auf alle Unbefangenen den Eindruck der grössten Unvernunft, da sie jede Nachgiebigkeit von Seiten Ew. Majestät Regierung in hohem Grade erschwert und den Wunsch durchblicken lässt, es zum Kriege zu treiben. Auch Lord Granville vermag sie nicht zu billigen, wünscht aber aufs Lebhafteste die Erhaltung des Friedens, und wird seinerseits Alles thun, was er kann, um dieselbe mit der Ehre beider Grossmächte vereinbar zu machen. Die Candidatur des Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern tadelt er aber entschieden, und hofft von der Weisheit und Friedensliebe Ew. Kgl. Majestät die Nichtgenehmigung derselben. Die schon durch die St. Gotthard-Bahn angeregte Gereiztheit der Franzosen findet er sehr begreiflich, und glaubt, dass besonders die plötzliche *Ueberraschung* durch das spanische Project die französische Regierung in Harnisch gebracht hat. . . .

[1] Also printed by Rheindorf, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

No. 35

PRINCE REUSS, Envoy at St. Petersburg, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2102 St. Petersburg, July 7, 1870

Sent 6 P.M. Rec. 9.50 P.M.

Général Fleury a déclaré au Prince Gortchacow que si le Prince de Hohenzollern accepte la couronne d'Espagne, ce sera la guerre avec la Prusse.

Il a en outre essayé de le monter contre nous, en lui prouvant comme quoi l'agrandissement de la puissance de la Prusse sera un danger aussi pour la Russie.

Chancelier lui [a] répondu (avant de m'avoir vu) que le Cabinet royal répondra, si on le questionnera, que cette affaire ne le regardait pas; donc il n'y avait pas de raison pour l'en rendre responsable. Quant au danger, il ne prévoyait pas un accroissement de puissance, mais plutôt un affaiblissement, vu les embarras. Du reste les rapports existants entre la Russie et la Prusse n'étaient pas de la nature à inspirer crainte.

Ambassadeur mécontent de cette réponse.

Le Prince Gortchacow ne voit pas danger; il conseille cependant la prudence et le calme de la force. Le Gouvernement français, humilié par les échecs précédents, se sera laissé aller à ces grosses motions pour plaire pays. Les paroles d'Ollivier ont fort déplu et il ne s'en est pas caché.

Le Chancelier compte toujours partir le 10. Il est satisfait de la déclaration que je lui ai faite.

Il me dit que l'Archiduc [a] invoqué bons offices de l'Empereur pour un rapprochement entre l'Autriche et la Prusse.

No. 36

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2083 Ems, July 7, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 7.45 P.M.[1]

Se. Majestät hat Ihr Telegramm [2] erhalten; mit Ihrer Haltung einverstanden, lässt Ihnen sagen, dass Frhr. von Werther's Reise Nichts mit der spanischen Sache zu thun habe, sondern seit Wochen beabsichtigt, seit 8 Tagen in Paris angekündigt gewesen. Die Kgl. Botschaft in Paris ist angewiesen, jede Erörterung und Besprechung über die Sache abzulehnen, welche weder Preussen noch Frankreich angehe, sondern Spanien allein; spanische Regierung wie Erbprinz seien Herren ihres Willens; wir achteten ihre Selbständigkeit, mischten uns als Regierung nicht in ihre Angelegenheiten; wolle Frankreich auf dieselben einwirken, müssten wir es nach Madrid verweisen. Die Botschaft soll durchaus keine Advocatur der Hohenzollernschen Candidatur machen, die eine rein persönliche ist, mit Preussen Nichts zu thun hat; sie soll aber vor allem den Eindruck vermeiden, als sei sie selbst, oder gar Se. Majestät, einzuschüchtern. — Se. Majestät bittet, auch Ihre Haltung danach einzurichten. Eine Zumuthung an Se. Majestät, dem Prinzen die Annahme zu verbieten, ist gar nicht als *möglich* vorauszusetzen.

No. 37

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
(Kt) No. 2 Ems, July 7, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station July 8, 6 A.M.

Ew. Excellenz Schreiben vom 5.[3] heut erhalten und dem König Vortrag gehalten. Se. Majestät mit den von Ihnen aufgestellten Grundsätzen einverstanden, hat Freiherrn v. Werther an Ihr Schreiben als seine Instruction verwiesen. Der König entschie-

[1] This telegram bears the note in Abeken's handwriting: *Von Sr. Majestät dem Könige im Wortlaut genehmigt.*
[2] See No. 23. [3] See No. 16.

den, jede Einmischung und Zumuthung Frankreichs uns gegenüber mit fester Sprache ab und nach Madrid zu weisen. Auch Freiherr v. Werther vollkommen durchdrungen von der Nothwendigkeit, jetzt nicht zurückzuweichen sondern der Sache ihren Lauf zu lassen. Auf Anregung Ihres gestrigen Telegramms [1] hat S. Majestät den Fürsten von Hohenzollern von Sachlage und nach Paris gegebenen Instructionen unterrichtet und Ihren Rath mitgetheilt.

No. 38

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2153 Paris, July 7, 1870

Rec. at Ems July 8. Rec. at Berlin July 9.

Der königliche Botschafter ist vorgestern Abend 5 Uhr nach Ems abgereist. Noch vorher hatte er Euerer Excellenz Telegramm No. 19 [2] vom 5. erhalten. Da er sich gegen den Herzog von Gramont bereits im Sinne des Schlusses dieses Telegramms ausgesprochen hatte, so überliess er mir, von demselben am nächsten Donnerstag (heute) auch meinerseits Gebrauch zu machen. Ich werde indessen den Herzog nicht sehen, weil der heutige Empfang abgesagt ist.

Die Aufregung über die Throncandidatur des Erb-Prinzen von Hohenzollern ist im Steigen begriffen. Die Agitation geht ganz besonders von den Regierungs-Organen aus, und das ist es, was die öffentliche Meinung vorzugsweise beunruhigt.

Ganz wie im Jahre 1866, wo die französische Regierungspresse zuerst in die Welt hinausposaunte, dass durch die preussischen Siege nicht Oesterreich, sondern Frankreich geschlagen und gedemüthigt wurde, so sind es auch heute wieder die Minister und ihre Organe, welche die Hohenzollernsche Angelegenheit als eine neue von Seiten Preussens an Frankreich zugefügte Beleidigung darstellen.

Der Constitutionnel vom 4. entblödet sich nicht, das spanische Volk an die traurigen Ereignisse zu erinnern, mit denen der Name Murat dereinst für Spanien verknüpft war.

[1] See No. 19. [2] See note 1 under No. 12.

In der nächsten Nummer erschien das von mir gestern gehorsamst eingereichte entrefilet.

Ganz ausser Fassung war der Gaulois gerathen, wie Euere Excellenz aus der von mir eingereichten Nummer ersehen haben werden.

Man hat mich von allen Seiten mit Fragen bestürmt und ist nicht wenig erstaunt, von mir zu hören, dass wir mit der Sache gar nichts zu thun haben.

Inzwischen war vorgestern von dem Deputirten Herrn Cochery in der Kammer folgende Interpellation an die Regierung gerichtet worden: "Nous demandons à interpeller le Gouvernement sur la Candidature d'un prince de la famille royale de Prusse au trône d'Espagne."

Es ist hier nicht Sitte, Interpellationen gleich zu beantworten.

Man konnte um so weniger diesmal auf ein Abweichen von der Regel rechnen, weil der Duc de Gramont den königlichen Botschafter gebeten hatte, er möge von Ems aus an mich irgend etwas telegraphiren, was er in der Kammer verwerthen könnte. Obgleich Baron Werther hierüber eine bestimmte Zusage nicht ertheilte, so lag das Eintreffen eines solchen Telegramms doch immer im Bereich der Möglichkeit. Dessenungeachtet hat der Herzog von Gramont gestern um halb drei Uhr schon geantwortet.

Die Gemüther waren durch das Fallen der Bourse und durch die Zeitungen schon genugsam aufgeregt, um die Spannung zu begreifen, mit der man der ministeriellen Erklärung entgegensah. Man scheint sich gegenseitig in Stimmung versetzt zu haben. Von verschiedenen Seiten wird mir bestätigt, einige Minister haben in den foyers lebhaft diskutirt und bekannt, dass sie nicht informirt gewesen seien; man werde aber seine Revange nehmen, etc. Auch Émile Ollivier hat sich in sehr leidenschaftlicher Weise gegen verschiedene Diplomaten geäussert.

Die Deklaration des Herzogs von Gramont war in einem gestern früh in St. Cloud abgehaltenen Ministerrath festgesetzt worden. Man hatte den Herzog etwas früher als halb drei Uhr in der Kammer erwartet. Sein verspätetes Eintreffen wird mir heute von einem Pressagenten dadurch erklärt, dass erst um 1

Uhr *aus Berlin* ein Bericht über die Ansichten unserer Allerhöchsten Regierung eingetroffen war. Die Analyse dieser Depesche stimmt so genau mit den Instructionen überein, die mir seit zwei Tagen auf telegraphischem Wege zugegangen sind, dass ich der Mittheilung des Agenten Glauben beimessen muss; allerdings will ich nicht unerwähnt lassen, dass die Depesche auch einen Hinweis auf die Wahl des Kaisers Napoleon durch das französische Volk enthalten soll, der in den mir vorliegenden Instructionen nicht erwähnt ist.[1] Die Art und Weise, in der die Königliche Regierung ihre Betheiligung bei der Angelegenheit in Abrede stellt, haben Herrn Ollivier und dem Herzog von Gramont missfallen, sie haben den mit dem Kaiser festgesetzten Text auf ihre Verantwortung verschärft, und die Deklaration daher schärfer gegeben, als sie ursprünglich abgefasst gewesen. Nachher habe der Kaiser die neue Fassung nicht gebilligt, und im *Journal officiel* sei die Deklaration wieder abgeschwächt worden. Dies scheint mir ebenfalls richtig, denn nach den mir von Ohrenzeugen gemachten Mittheilungen sind die vom Herzog gebrauchten Worte schärfer [2] gewesen als ich sie heute in dem Journal officiel vorfinde.

Der Herzog von Gramont hat sofort nach seinem Eintreffen in der Kammer die Tribüne betreten. Er hat die Deklaration mit der ihm eigenen Affektation gesprochen, den Beifallsbezeugungen hinreichende Zeit gelassen, um sich auszutoben, dann die Worte, welche möglicherweise hätten überhört werden können, wiederholt. . . . Die Kammer ist in einem endlosen Beifallssturm ausgebrochen und selbst die Nüchternen haben mitgeschrien, um nur nicht des Mangels an Patriotismus angeklagt zu werden. . . .

[1] Thile's marginal note: *Von* mir nie *etwas ähnliches geäussert.*

[2] This word (*schärfer*) is underlined by someone, with two exclamation points in the margin.

No. 39

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2154 Paris, July 7, 1870

Rec. at Ems July 8. Rec. at Berlin July 9.

Wie ich schon gestern zu melden die Ehre hatte,[1] kam mein russischer College Okouneff unmittelbar nach der Sitzung zu mir.

Er war ausserordentlich aufgeregt; sagte, er habe eine ähnliche Demonstration nie erlebt, Frankreich habe mit der Erklärung die Schiffe hinter sich verbrannt, und er sowohl wie Lord Lyons haben sich die Frage vorgelegt, ob man hier einen Krieg mit Preussen vom Zaune brechen wolle. Einen ähnlichen Eindruck haben auch Mitglieder der Linken und viele Andere gehabt und bei diesen ist die Besorgniss noch keineswegs verschwunden. Alles blickt besorgt nach Berlin und fragt sich, wie die Königliche Regierung die französische Erklärung aufnehmen werde.

Ich finde die Eile mit der die Regierung auf die Interpellation geantwortet hat, unanständig, die Antwort selbst unstaatsmännisch und tactlos. . . .

Dessenungeachtet kann ich die Ansicht, dass man einen Krieg gegen Preussen vom Zaune brechen will, noch nicht theilen. Ich glaube vielmehr, dass hier der Mangel an staatsmännischer Erfahrung Olliviers und die gänzliche Unfähigkeit des Herzogs von Gramont die Regierung in eine sehr gefährliche Sackgasse gebracht haben. Die Wuth darüber, von ihren diplomatischen Agenten nicht rechtzeitig unterrichtet gewesen zu sein und die leidenschaftliche Animosität die im Herzog von Gramont gegen Preussen noch immer rege sein mag, haben bei den Rathschlüssen der Minister gewiss viel mitgewirkt. Sie lassen es sich nicht ausreden, dass seit Monaten zwischen Berlin und Madrid verhandelt wurde. Der Herzog von Gramont hat in seiner unbegrenzten Eitelkeit einen parlamentarischen Succes angestrebt.

Das Ministerium will später mit einem politischen Siege über Preussen prahlen können, und sich das Verdienst vindiciren, Preussen zum Aufgeben eines Thron-Candidaten bewogen zu

[1] See No. 22.

haben, nachdem man vorher genau wusste, dass wir den Candidaten gar nicht aufgestellt haben. . . .

No. 40

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires, at Paris, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2155 Paris, July 7, 1870

Ich fragte heute Lord Lyons, der der gestrigen Sitzung beiwohnte, nach seinen Eindrücken. Er erwiederte in seiner trockenen Manier, er finde die *Situation très grave* wegen der Uebereinstimmung und der Heftigkeit des Chauvinismus. Er glaube nicht, dass die französische Regierung mit der Erklärung einen Krieg provociren wolle; diese sei für die Kammer berechnet gewesen. Als diplomatisches Mittel fände er die Erklärung "*mal inventée*" und sehr ungeschickt. Die französische Regierung habe die Schiffe hinter sich verbrannt, und man müsse jetzt sehen, die Spanier zu bewegen, auf den Prinz von Hohenzollern zu verzichten.

Olozaga begiebt sich auf Veranlassung des Kaisers nach Madrid. Auf der spanischen Botschaft wollte man die Nachricht haben, Oesterreich, England, und Italien thäten Schritte in Madrid Behufs Aufgeben des Prinzen Leopold.

No. 41

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2162 Paris, July 7, 1870

Fürst Metternich [1] sagte mir heute, er sei überzeugt, dass die spanische Thronfolgefrage an sich für die französische Regierung Nebensache sei. Gramont habe sich nur darauf gestürzt und die Gelegenheit bei den Haaren herbeigezogen, um mit einem Akt der Energie hervortreten zu können und sich irgend einen politischen Success zu verschaffen.

Auch Chevalier Nigra [2] theilt diese Ansicht; derselbe fügt aber

[1] Austro-Hungarian ambassador at Paris. [2] Italian ambassador at Paris.

noch hinzu, die französische Regierung werde, wenn die Sache nicht bald beigelegt sei, mit gleicher Ueberstürzung irgend einen Akt der Ungeduld ausführen, der die Beilegung des Conflikts sehr erschweren, wo nicht unmöglich machen würde. Man müsse täglich eine neue unangenehme Demonstration in der Kammer erwarten. Im Allgemeinen bestätigen die Aeusserungen der beiden Diplomaten das was ich in meinen Berichten auszusprechen die Ehre hatte; ich kann aber nicht umhin hinzuzufügen, dass ich die Situation für ausserordentlich ernst halte.

Gramont hat sowohl ihm wie dem Fürsten Metternich gesagt, er erwarte täglich die Antwort des Baron von Werther. Die Antwort, die man hier erwartet, ist, dass Seine Majestät der König als Familienoberhaupt dem Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern die Annahme der Krone Spaniens verbietet.

Chevalier Nigra war der Ansicht, dass eine schnelle und freiwillige Entsagung des Erbprinzen das einzige Mittel sei, dem Kriege vorzubeugen.

Ich habe dem Gesandten erwiedert, ich hätte noch gar keine Nachrichten weder aus Berlin noch aus Ems, für mich läge der Schwerpunkt der Frage gar nicht in der Kron-Kandidatur des Prinzen von Hohenzollern, sondern in dem Auftreten der französischen Regierung und in der Art und Weise, wie man dasselbe bei uns aufnehmen würde.

No. 42

PRINCE REUSS, Envoy at St. Petersburg, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2167 St. Petersburg, July 7, 1870

Rec. at Berlin July 10. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Eurer Excellenz Telegramm No. 12 [1] die Candidatur des Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern für den spanischen Thron betreffend, habe ich gestern zu erhalten die Ehre gehabt.

Da im Laufe des heutigen Tages der Telegraph die Reden brachte, welche die französischen Minister über diesen Gegenstand im gesetzgebenden Körper gehalten haben, so begab ich

[1] See No. 17.

mich zu Fürst Gortchakoff um zu hören was für Nachrichten er erhalten haben dürfte.

Er theilte mir mit, dass Vormittags der französische Botschafter bei ihm gewesen sei und ihm auf Befehl seiner Regierung erklärt habe, dass wenn Preussen den Erbprinzen v. Hohenzollern auf den spanischen Thron setzen wolle, so würde Frankreich sich genöthigt sehen dies zu verhindern, "c'est la guerre"; die Interessen Frankreichs könnten nicht dulden, dass die ohnehin schon so bedeutend angewachsene Macht Preussens sich noch vergrössere dadurch, dass ein preussischer Prinz auf dem spanischen Thron sässe; dies könne und würde Frankreich nicht dulden.

Fürst Gortchakoff hat sich diese Erklärung wiederholen lassen und General Fleury hat hierauf versucht ihn gegen uns aufzuregen. Er hat ihm in langer Rede auseinandergesetzt, wie Russland ebenso wie Frankreich unmöglich mit gleichgültigem Auge zusehen könne, dass Preussens Macht immer mehr wachse. In jedem Machtzuwachs dieser Macht liege eine Gefahr für Russland, welches bald nichts mehr im Baltischen Meere zu sagen haben werde und dessen Küsten ebenfalls einmal bedroht werden könnten.

Der Kanzler hat den Botschafter ausreden lassen und ihm darauf Folgendes geantwortet: er würde zuvörderst Seiner Majestät dem Kaiser Vortrag über das eben Gehörte halten und Allerhöchstdessen Befehle einholen; er könne ihm indessen nicht verhehlen, dass er die Gereiztheit des französischen Kabinets gegen Preussen nicht verstehen könnte. Wenn man seine Gründe haben könne lieber den einen als den andern Prinzen auf dem spanischen Thron zu sehen, so sei doch Preussen nicht für eine Unterhandlung verantwortlich zu machen die im Geheimen zwischen dem Marschall Prim und einem Prinzen des Hohenzollernschen Hauses geführt worden wäre. "Allez interpeller le Comte de Bismarck," hat der Kanzler gesagt, "et il vous répondra que le Cabinet du Roi, son maître, n'a rien à y voir et qu'il ne se mêle pas des affaires intérieures d'Espagne. Or, comme la Prusse ne songe pas à installer un de ses Princes sur le trône d'Espagne, la France ne la peut pas en empêcher et l'incident se vide de soi-même."

Was nun die Gefahren anbetreffen, welchen Russland durch einen Machtzuwachs Preussens ausgesetzt sein sollte, so müsste er der Kanzler zunächst gestehen, dass es ihm unmöglich sei diesen Machtzuwachs zu erkennen. Im Gegentheil, einen Hohenzollern auf dem Throne Spaniens müsse er vielmehr als eine Schwächung Preussens ansehen, weil letzterem aus einer solchen Combination eine Masse Schwierigkeiten und Ungelegenheiten erwachsen würden. Ferner habe man in Russland noch nicht Gelegenheit gehabt sich durch einen Machtzuwachs Preussens bedroht zu sehen. Die norddeutsche Flotte in der Ostsee habe für die russischen Interessen noch nichts Gefahrdrohendes und es dürften noch Jahrzehnte vergehen bis dieselbe zu einer Flotte ersten Ranges herangewachsen sein würde. Ausserdem wären die Beziehungen zwischen beiden Höfen derart dass eine Bedrohung Russlands nicht zu fürchten wäre, um so weniger als die preussischen Interessen sich glücklicher Weise auf keinem Gebiete mit den russischen kreuzten.

Der Kanzler hat dem Botschafter hierauf über die Rede des Herrn Ollivier gesprochen, die ihm sehr missfallen hat, und so scheint derselbe nicht sehr befriedigt das Kabinet des Fürsten verlassen zu haben.

Nachdem der Fürst mir das Vorstehende mitgetheilt hatte, sagte er mir, er sähe für den Augenblick keine Gefahr für den Frieden in der Situation und glaube nicht, dass das französische Kabinet ernstlich darauf dachte den Krieg zu wollen. Dasselbe habe es augenscheinlich für nothwendig gehalten diesen Fall zu benutzen, um mit hochtonenden Worten von der Macht und dem Einfluss zu sprechen, welchen Frankreich in Europa auszuüben im Stande sei: man habe dies für nöthig gehalten um die Erinnerung an die zahlreichen Schlappen zu verwischen, welche die französische auswärtige Politik in den letzten Jahren erlitten hat und unter denen die französische Eitelkeit immer noch leidet.

Dies schliesse aber nicht aus, dass die Situation leicht gefährlich werden könnte, wenn man in Deutschland auf den in Paris angeschlagenen Ton in gleicher Weise antworten würde. Er könne daher nur zur Vorsicht rathen, "ayez le calme de la force," sagte der Fürst; wir würden uns durch eine stolze Ruhe nichts verge-

ben, weil ganz Europa wisse, wie mächtig wir wären und wir einen Krieg mit Frankreich nicht zu scheuen brauchten. Die Art und Weise wie das Königl. Kabinet die Sache behandle, sei durchaus korrect und könne er die Antwort, die der französische Geschäftsträger in Berlin auf seine Anfrage erhalten habe, nur im höchsten Grade billigen, weil der Incidenzfall dadurch sofort auf seinen wahren Standpunkt zurückgeführt würde. Es sei nun zu wünschen, dass die französische Regierung für diese Logik zugänglich sein möchte und er hoffe, dass der Bericht des Generals Fleury über die Unterhaltung die er mit ihm heute gehabt habe, etwas abkühlend in Paris wirken werde.

Ich habe dem Fürsten Gortchakoff für seine Mittheilungen gedankt, ebenso auch ihm meine Anerkennung über den Ton ausgesprochen, in welchem er die französischen Eröffnungen erwiedert hat. Ich habe ihm ferner gesagt, dass die Regierung Sr. Majestät des Königs gewiss den französischen Rodomontaden gegenüber die würdige und friedliebende Haltung nicht verlieren würde, welche sie immer an den Tag gelegt habe, dass es aber zu fürchten sei wie die öffentliche Meinung in Deutschland in nicht geringe Aufregung versetzt werden dürfte. Wer die Unvorsichtigkeit begänge ein solches Feuer anzuzünden, der müsse auch die Verantwortlichkeit für die daraus entspringenden Folgen tragen.

Einige Telegramme, die der Kanzler von den Gesandschaften in Wien und Paris erhalten hatte, bestätigen, dass die französische Regierung entschlossen sei, die Thronbesteigung des Prinzen von Hohenzollern nicht zu dulden.

No. 43

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER and to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*

No. 230 Ems Berlin, July 8, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 12 M.

Rascon theilt mir eben mit, der französische Geschäftsträger wolle mich heute fragen, ob der Kaiser Napoleon und die Franzosen nicht durch eine Erklärung beruhigt werden könnten, dass

die Wahl des Prinzen von Preussen nicht *genehmigt* werde. Ferner sagte mir Rascon, dass Graf Bylandt,[1] der intimste Vertraute Benedetti's, den Gedanken einer europäischen Conferenz so bestimmt andeute, dass man es nicht für seine Privatansicht halten könne. Rascon hat ihm erwiedert, der blosse Gedanke an eine solche Behandlung der Sache, wodurch Spanien mit Griechenland auf eine Linie gestellt, sei eine Insulte für die spanische Nation.

(For Varzin alone.) Soll ich Le Sourd's zu erwartende Anfrage ad referendum nehmen, oder schriftliche Formulirung verlangen, oder jede Erklärung abweisen?

Ich werde mich heute verleugnen lassen.

No. 44

KING WILLIAM to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Autograph Note*
Ems, July 8, 1870

3.30 P.M.

Ich glaube, wir sind es *Deutschland* schuldig, eine Mittheilung zu machen, damit dasselbe nicht auch glaube, dass Preussen dasselbe in einen Krieg mit Frankreich verwickelt *hat* oder gar will. Telegraphiren Sie deshalb an Bismarck.

No. 45

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
(Kt) No. 3 Ems, July 8, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 4.50 P.M.

Se. Majestät befiehlt mir soeben, an Ew. Exc. zu telegraphiren: "Er glaube, wir seien *Deutschland* schuldig, eine Mittheilung zu machen, damit dasselbe nicht auch glaube, dass Preussen es in einen Krieg mit Frankreich verwickelt hat oder gar will." Der König wünscht schleunigst Ihre Ansicht über Sache und Form.

[1] Envoy of the Netherlands at Berlin.

No. 46

BISMARCK to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2118 Varzin, July 8, 1870
Sent 5.15 P.M. Rec. 6.15 P.M.

Ad referendum für Seine Majestät wird man immer nehmen müssen, was der französische Geschäftsträger mittheilt,[1] aber doch Zweifel anregen, ob der König in der Lage sein werde, sich in diese rein spanische Angelegenheit zu mischen, zumal dieselbe in ihrer jetzigen actenmässigen Lage weder für Frankreich noch für uns Anknüpfungspunkte biete. Sollte er drohende Andeutungen auch nur von fern einfliessen lassen, so bitte ich kühl und hart zu antworten, dass wir uns natürlich wehren würden, wenn uns jemand angreift.

No. 47

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to PRINCE REUSS, Envoy at St. Petersburg.
Tg. Cph.
No. A 2102 Ems, July 8, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 6.45 P.M.

Sa Majesté prie V. A. de témoigner au Prince Gortchakow Sa haute satisfaction de la réponse donnée au Général Fleury, et des dispositions montrées par le chancelier. Sa Majesté ne comprend pas comment la France puisse faire la guerre à la Prusse pour un évènement qui ne regarde que l'Espagne indépendante dans ses résolutions, et auquel la Prusse n'a rien à faire, ni à appuyer ni à défendre. Le conseil du chancelier sera suivi; le mot heureux: le calme de la force, est la véritable expression des dispositions de Sa Majesté.

No. 48

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin and to BISMARCK at Varzin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2124 Paris, July 8, 1870
Sent 7 P.M. Rec. 9.15 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Man erwartet hier mit Ungeduld Antwort auf Fragen und Aufträge, welche Frhr. v. Werther nach Ems mitnahm. Die Kammer dringt auf neue Erklärungen.

[1] Cf. No. 43.

Nach meinen Wahrnehmungen ist ein neuer überstürzter Act der Regierung, sei es im gesetzgebenden Körper oder auf anderen Gebieten, zu befürchten, wenn zu langes Stillschweigen unsrerseits beobachtet wird. Graf Benedetti sei angewiesen nach Ems zu gehen.

No. 49

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
(Kt) No. 4 Ems, July 8, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 7.45 P.M.

Graf Benedetti hat sich auf heut Nacht angekündigt. Aeusserungen seines Vertrauten Bylandt in Berlin lassen beinah vermuthen, dass er die Idee eines Congresses bringen werde, worüber Rascon schon heftige Entrüstung ausspricht. Seine Majestät wird ihm im Sinn der Instructionen für die Botschaft in Paris, aber *sehr ernst* über Grammont's Rede sprechen. Sollte er Congress Ideen erwähnen, so wird S. Majestät auf Spanien verweisen; ob *Spanien* seine Thronfrage durch Europäischen Congress entscheiden lassen wolle? Preussen habe keine Frage für einen Congress.

No. 50

LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State.
Tg. Cph.
No. A 2128 Varzin, July 8, 1870
Sent 8.45 P.M. Rec. 9.15 P.M.

Graf Bismarck stellt anheim dem französischen Geschäftsträger als persönliche Ansicht zu sagen: der Lärm, den die Franzosen gemacht, erschwere uns ein Entgegenkommen.

No. 51

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to KING WILLIAM and to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2125 London, July 8, 1870
Sent 8.45 P.M. Rec. at Berlin 2.45 A.M., July 9.[1]

In Folge der Telegramme von Ems, Varzin und Berlin von gestern, habe ich heute nochmals mit Lord Granville gesprochen,

[1] Rheindorf, *op. cit.*, p. 163, prints this telegram in a somewhat different form (variant sent to Varzin?).

um ihm den Standpunkt der Regierung Ew. Majestät mit voller Autorität klar zu machen. Er ist bei dieser Gelegenheit wieder auf seinen Wunsch der Erhaltung des Friedens zurückgekommen und meint, dass Frankreich viele Präcedenzfälle anführen könne, worin die grossen Mächte, um Eifersucht unter einander zu vermeiden, ihre Prinzen von einer Königswahl ausgeschlossen hätten. Er hat heute an Lord Loftus geschrieben, um Ew. Königl. Majestät Regierung zu bitten dies in Erwägung zu ziehen, um mit den andern Grossmächten zusammenzuwirken, um zu verhindern, dass aus der spanischen Königswahl eine Störung des europäischen Friedens entstehe. Ich habe einstweilen die Analogie nicht zugelassen und hervorgehoben, dass die unkluge Sprache der französischen Minister überhaupt fast jedes Zusammenwirken unmöglich mache. Lord Granville war übrigens sehr sanft und weit entfernt zu drohen, sagte mir aber vertraulich, er sei nach allem, was er höre, überzeugt, dass Frankreich eventuell mit uns Krieg machen werde.

No. 52

BISMARCK to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2126 Varzin, July 8, 1870
Sent 10.45 P.M. Rec. July 9, 12.24 A.M.

Officiellen Text Herzog von Gramont's in Graf Solms Depesche gelesen. Finde Sprache über alle Erwartung anmassend und plump; zweifelhaft ob Ungeschicklichkeit oder parti pris. Für letztere spricht Lärm den man gemacht um jede Möglichkeit des Einlenkens abzuschneiden. Internationale Reclamationen wegen Parlamentsrede widerstreben mir. Presse aber muss sehr grob werden in möglichst vielen Blättern.[1]

[1] The telegram bears the marginal note: *Herr Dr. Busch hat Kenntniss genommen.* Busch in his *Tagebuchblätter*, i, pp. 33, 34, gives this telegram in "approximate" form.

No. 53

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN.

Tg. Cph.

No. 231*a* Ems — Berlin, July 8, 1870

(Time of sending and reception not given.)

Graf Bismarck ist von Hause aus von allen nur einigermassen erheblichen Ereignissen in der spanischen Sache in Kenntniss erhalten worden.[1]

No. 54

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State.

No. A 2173 — Ems, July 8, 1870

(Time of sending and reception not given.)

Ich kann nicht mit Sicherheit voraussetzen, dass Ew. Excellenz aus Varzin Abschrift des Schreibens,[2] welches S. Excellenz der Herr Bundeskanzler u. d. 5 d. M. an mich gerichtet hat (von Hn. v. Bucher's Hand, mit der Unterschrift Sr. Excellenz, und auch wohl dictirt) erhalten habe, da ich keine Erwähnung desselben weder telegraphisch noch in den heutigen Eingängen finde; ich beehre mich daher zur Vorsorge Abschrift desselben einzureichen.

Ich habe dasselbe gestern sofort zur Kenntniss Seiner Majestät gebracht; Allerhöchstdieselbe zeigte Sich mit den darin aufgestellten Grundsätzen vollkommen einverstanden, welche auch jetzt noch ihre Geltung behielten, wenngleich das Schreiben abgefasst *ehe* der H. Bundeskanzler von den übereilten Erklärungen der französischen Regierung im Corps législatif Kenntniss haben konnte — ja, *ehe* dieselben erfolgt waren, und nur noch der erste, "allerbedenklichste Eindruck" der Telegramme des Botschafters.

S. Majestät verwiesen daher in meiner Gegenwart den Botschafter H. v. Werther darauf als allgemeine Instruction, mit dem Vorbehalt, dass in nebensachlichen Details wie die Motivirung der Reise des Botschafters und die Details der Verhandlungen eine etwas abweichende Sprache durch die Umstände geboten erscheine, um nicht in Widerspruch mit Thatsächlichem zu gerathen.

[1] See No. 30. [2] See No. 16.

Ich habe des Herrn Grafs Excellenz von dieser Aufnahme seines Schreibens in Kenntniss telegraphisch gesetzt.[1]

Auf Befehl S. Majestät sende ich durch Graf Waldersee, der heut nach Paris zurückkehrt, einen Auszug des Grundsätzlichen in diesem Schreiben an Graf Solms, als auch für seine, übrigens bis zur Rückkehr des Botschafters ganz reservirt zu wahrende Haltung, massgebend.

Ob nicht durch die Worte des H. v. Gramont im Corps législatif, namentlich die Erwähnung einer Puissance étrangère, die einen seiner Prinzen auf den spanischen Thron setzen wolle, eine schärfere Haltung und eine ostensible Abweisung dieses Angriffs in irgend einer Form geboten wird, werden Ew. Excellenz selbst und der Herr Bundeskanzler erwägen, nachdem dieses zu seiner Kenntniss zukomme.[2]

No. 55

BARON VON CANITZ, Envoy at Madrid, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2262 — Madrid, July 8, 1870

Rec. at Berlin July 13.

Vorgestern habe ich dem hiesigen französischen Botschafter, mit dem ich auf freundschaftlichem Fuss stehe, in einem öffentlichen Garten begegnet. Er empfing mich mit dem Ausruf "quel malheur"; auf meine Frage, was geschehen sei, sagte er, quel malheur que cette candidature, nous aurons inévitablement la guerre entre la France et la Prusse, si jamais cette candidature s'effectuait. Ich fragte ihn, ob der Herzog von Montpensier oder ein italienischer Prinz auf dem spanischen Thron Frankreich erwünschter gewesen wäre? Er erwiederte, sans le moindre doute nous préférions la république à une dynastie Hohenzollern en Espagne, l'opinion publique en France ne pourra jamais supporter cette idée, elle regardera l'avènement au trône espagnol d'un Prince Hohenzollern comme un nouvel échec, comme la guerre en Mexique, comme la bataille de Sadova, . . .

[1] See No. 37.

[2] Opposite the final passage Thile has added the marginal note: *Wird mit Bezug auf dem Passus in dem Telegram A 2126 aus Varzin vom 8ten: "Reclamationen wegen Parlamentsreden widerstreben mir" als erledigt anzunehmen sein.* (See No. 52 above.)

No. 56

BARON VON CÁNITZ, Envoy at Madrid, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2264 Madrid, July 8, 1870

Rec. July 13.

Die spanische Regierung hat eine note explicative über die spanische Thronfrage verfasst, die heute Madrid verlässt und an sämmtliche Spanien befreundete Regierungen gerichtet ist. . . .

Von einem Gerücht, nach welchem in Brüssel eine französische Conferenz über die Spanisch-Hohenzollernsche Frage stattfinden sollte, von dem Herr Salazar[1] Erwähnung thut, wusste der Ministro de Estado[2] heute noch nichts.

Sehr unangenehm berührt schien Letzterer aber von den Aeusserungen des Duc de Gramont im Corps législatif français, wonach eine Demüthigung Frankreichs, Spaniens oder des Prinzen von Hohenzollern unvermeidlich wäre: Spanien aber würde festhalten an seinem Recht sich selbst den König zu wählen und der Widerspruch Frankreichs würde dem Prinzen in Spanien nur zu Statten kommen.

No. 57

BARON VON CANITZ, Envoy at Madrid, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2265 Madrid, July 8, 1870

Ew. Excellenz beehre ich mich beikommendes Flugblatt, "El Candidato oficial por D. Eusebio Salazar y Mazaredo," welches mir der Verfasser soeben in mehreren Exemplaren mit dem Ersuchen zustellt, dieselbe sicher nach Berlin und Sigmaringen gelangen zu lassen, ganz gehorsamst zu übersenden. . . . Herr Salazar schreibt mir gleichzeitig, dass die kleine Schrift bereits gestern in allen Casinos, Lesegesellschaften gelesen worden ist und dass der Effekt derselben ein "vorzüglicher" war.

[1] The famous deputy in the Cortes, who had been the chief intermediary between Prim, Bismarck, and Prince Leopold.

[2] Señor Sagasta, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Die Sendung einiger Exemplaren nach Sigmaringen, die von hier aus direkt nicht zu bewerkstelligen war, gebe ich gehorsamst anheim, . . . von Berlin aus zu veranlassen.[1]

No. 58

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London.

No. A 2103 Ems, July 9, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 6 A.M.

Se. Majestät befiehlt, in Erwiederung Ihres gestrigen Telegramms,[2] daran festzuhalten, dass Preussen und der Bund bei der ganzen Sache unbetheiligt. Wir haben nie daran gedacht, einen Prinzen auf den spanischen Thron zu setzen, oder auch nur anzubieten oder vorzuschlagen. Die von Spanien ausgegangenen Verhandlungen sind zwischen Prim und dem Erbprinzen direkt geführt; Se. Majestät hat aus Achtung vor der Selbständigkeit der spanischen Nation und vor der Weisheit des Prinzen auf die Entschliessungen des Letzteren nicht einwirken wollen, und kann nicht einsehen, dass man Ihm und Seine Regierung dafür verantwortlich mache. Will Frankreich Spanien bevormunden und Spanien sich dies gefallen lassen, so ist es *selbst* der *Friedensstörer;* das muss man in England einsehen. Se. Majestät glaubt nicht an den Krieg, fürchtet ihn aber eben so wenig als Er ihn jemals suchen wird. Se. Majestät sieht ruhige und feste Haltung — le calme de la force — auf unserer Seite als das Einzige an, was *wir* thun können, um den Krieg zu verhüten. Durch seine unklugen, übereilten und übertriebenen Erklärungen hat Frankreich sich ins Unrecht gesetzt. Se. Majestät befriedigt, dass auch Lord Granville dieselben misbilligt.

[1] Marginal note: *In der heutigen* Cölnischen Zeitung *übersetzt abgedruckt.*

[2] See No. 51.

No. 59

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*
(Unnumbered) Varzin, July 9, 1870
Sent 9 A.M. Rec. 11 A.M.

Sehr erfreut zu ersehen,[1] dass Se. Majestät gegen Graf Benedetti die anmassende Sprache des Herzogs von Grammont ernst zurückweisen will. Congress nur anwendbar, wenn Spanien ihn annehme.

No. 60

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2198 Varzin, July 9, 1870
Sent 9.30 A.M. Rec. 12 M.

Ich würde es unbedenklich finden,[2] die Gesandten in Dresden, München, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe in demselben Sinn wie nach London und Petersburg geschehen, darüber zu informiren, dass die Angelegenheit keine preussische sondern lediglich spanische ist und wir die Pariser Auffassung höchst befremdlich und die Sprache Gramonts anmasslich und unberechtigt finden. Zu Aufträgen für Mittheilungen an die Regierungen liegt eigentlich noch gar kein amtliches Material vor. Der bisherige Thatbestand besteht nur in dem in Paris künstlich montirten Lärm. Die Einwirkung auf die öffentliche Meinung Deutschlands fällt meines Erachtens zunächst der Presse zu. Sollte Se. Majestät dieser Auffassung beitreten, so wollen Sie den Staatssekretär zum Erlass der fraglichen Mittheilungen an die Gesandten anregen.

No. 61

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris.
Tg. Cph.
No. A 2124 Ems, July 9, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 11.15 A.M.

Weder Se. Majestät noch der Botschafter begreifen die in Ihrem Telegramm no. 47 [3] ausgesprochene Bemerkung. Der Botschafter

[1] Cf. No. 49. [2] Cf. Nos. 44 and 45. [3] See No. 48.

hat sich bereitwillig erboten, seine Reise nach Ems zu benutzen, um die Pariser Eindrücke dort mitzutheilen; man hat in Paris nicht für gut gefunden, das Ergebniss abzuwarten, ehe man sich durch die übereilte Erklärung Gramonts öffentlich compromittirte, Erklärungen von uns zu verlangen gestehen wir Frankreich nicht das Recht zu; die Sache geht *Preussen* nicht an, nur *Spanien*. Die von Spanien ausgegangenen Verhandlungen sind ohne alle Betheiligung der preussischen Regierung direkt zwischen den Spaniern und dem Prinzen geführt; Se. Majestät der König hat, als Er von denselben erfahren, keine Einwirkung ausüben wollen und wirklich keine ausgeübt, weil Er die Selbständigkeit der spanischen Nation und die Weisheit der Entschliessungen des Prinzen achtete; Er hat die Sache weder befördern noch verbieten können und wollen. Se. Majestät befiehlt, der französischen Aufregung gegenüber ruhige und feste Haltung, nicht provozirend, aber auch jeden Anschein vermeidend, als seien wir einzuschüchtern.

No. 62

BISMARCK to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2142 Varzin, July 9, 1870
Sent 11.30 A.M. Rec. 1.30 P.M.

Für Presse benutzen.

Wer Congress will, muss nicht vorher öffentlich Krieg androhen für den Fall, dass sein Wille nicht geschieht.[1]

No. 63

LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State.
Tg. Cph.
No. A 2143 Varzin, July 9, 1870
Sent 2 P.M. Rec. 3.15 P.M.

Graf Solms möge, wenn veranlasst, sagen:

Erklärungen hätten wir nicht zu geben, sondern über Gramont's Rede eher zu erwarten.[2]

[1] This telegram bears the marginal note: *Herr Dr. Busch hat Kenntniss genommen*. Cf. Busch, *Tagebuchblätter*, i, p. 34.

[2] This was telegraphed by Thile to Count Solms the same day.

No. 64

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2145 Paris, July 9, 1870

Sent 2.30 P.M. Rec. 5.55 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Die Situation wird mit jedem Moment ernster. Französische Rüstungen bereits im Gange. Meine Collegen sowohl wie andere bestunterrichtete Personen haben Gewissheit, dass wenn Preussen nicht innerhalb weniger Tage Hohenzollernsche Candidatur definitiv verhindert, Kriegserklärung Frankreichs unmittelbar bevorsteht. Frankreich scheint diese Gelegenheit zum Kriege besonders vortheilhaft, weil das Objekt kein deutsches und dieser Krieg hier *populär* ist.[1]

No. 65

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2146 Paris, July 9, 1870

Sent 3 P.M. Rec. 5.55 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Olozaga hat Reise aufgegeben. Er hat Herzog von Gramont die Hohenzollernsche Throncandidatur officiell angezeigt, Herzog v. Gramont erwiedert, Declaration im gesetzgebenden Körper sei seine Antwort.

Frankreich werde Spanien ganz aus dem Spiele lassen aber an Preussen den Krieg erklären, wenn Hohenzollern nicht verzichtet. Olozaga geantwortet, Spanien werde unter den Umständen Throncandidatur erst recht festhalten.[2]

No. 66

COUNT VON WESDEHLEN, Chargé d'Affaires at Florence, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2170 Florence, July 9, 1870

Sent 4.30 P.M. Rec. July 10, 9.45 A.M.

Generalsecretair Blanc gestern gesprochen. Die Haltung Frankreichs in der spanischen Thronbesteigung veranlasst die

[1] This despatch was transmitted from Thile to Bucher the same day.

[2] This despatch was transmitted from Thile to Bucher the same day.

italienische Regierung zu den ernstesten Besorgnissen, da man in Paris angeblich die Erklärung der Regierung Sr. Majestät des Königs, dass sie das Anerbieten der spanischen Krone an den Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern nicht annehme, ungenügend findet und eine förmliche Untersagung der Annahme verlangt. Vertraulichen Nachrichten aus Paris zufolge wird die Mobilmachung der französischen Armee beabsichtigt! Aus London, St. Petersburg und Wien hat die italienische Regierung keine Mittheilungen von Bedeutung. In London hat sie sich aber bereit erklärt, mit England auf eine Verständigung einzuwirken. Ohne Unterschied der Parteien spricht sich in Italien beispielsweise die öffentliche Meinung vorwiegend gegen die französische Anmassung aus, was Herr Blanc mir gegenüber erklärte.

No. 67

LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*
(Unnumbered) Varzin, July 9, 1870
Sent 5.57 P.M. Rec. 7.10 P.M.

Graf von Bismarck wünscht Abschrift, eventuell genaue Mittheilung, der Werther'schen Instruction. Wäre darin erwähnt, dass Seine Majestät abgerathen, so wäre hinzuzufügen: nicht etwa weil er an schlechten Eindruck in Frankreich glaubt, sondern aus Familienrücksichten. So lange Spanien Geheimniss wünschte, wären wir ihm schuldig gewesen, dasselbe zu bewahren. — Wenn Graf Waldersee[1] in Ems, scheint seine sofortige Rückkehr nach Paris geboten.

No. 68

BISMARCK to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2152 Varzin, July 9, 1870
Sent 6.15 P.M. Rec. 7.37 P.M.

Ist Graf von Waldersee auf Posten? Genaue nach Rücksprache mit Freiherrn von Moltke und durch Eisenbahnbeamte zu verstärkende Beobachtungen nöthig.

[1] Military attaché at Paris.

Für Chauvin [1] und Weishaupt: Lassen Sie durch unverdächtige Reisende die Vertheilung und Bewegungen des Militair-Eisenbahntransportmaterials in Frankreich überwachen. Kosten dem auswärtigen Amt zu liquidiren.

No. 69

PRINCE REUSS, Envoy at St. Petersburg, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2160 St. Petersburg, July 9, 1870

Sent 7.30 P.M. Rec. 10.50 P.M.

Der Kaiser hat —— —— [2] gnädigst heute entlassen. Er bittet Se. Majestät den König dringend, eine jede Zustimmung zu der Candidatur des Prinzen von Hohenzollern zu desavouiren, der ihm wenig Sympathie einflösst. Eine Unterstützung desselben habe kein Interesse, und ein Conflict mit Frankreich sei ein zu hoher Preis dafür. Ich reise morgen mit Fürst Gortschakoff ab.

No. 70

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2158 Paris, July 9, 1870

Sent 10.40 P.M. Rec. at Berlin July 10, 3.05 A.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Graf Waldersee meldet:

Im Kriegsministerium und Marineministerium sind umfangreiche Vorbereitungen zur Führung eines grossen Krieges im Gange. Reserven sind noch nicht einberufen, doch hat es den Anschein, dass Truppenbewegungen bereits morgen beginnen. Die Eisenbahnen sind davon avisirt. Es ist Neigung vorhanden mit unmobilen Truppen loszuschlagen.

[1] Director general of telegraphs.

[2] In the original decipherment of the telegram this passage was found illegible.

No. 71

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2198 Varzin, July 9, 1870
(Time of sending and reception not given.)

Vielleicht erklärt sich Frankreichs Haltung theilweise aus der falschen Vorstellung, einen nichtnationalen Grund gegen Preussen gefunden zu haben. Ich glaube wir sollten durch Benedetti oder Solms vertraulich insinuiren, der König werde, wenn nach Grammonts Drohungen keine Beruhigung für uns erfolgte, den Reichstag berufen um gemeinsame Haltung mit der Volksvertretung festzustellen. Bitte S. M. danach zu fragen. Sobald ich weiss, wie Benedetti sich ausgesprochen, werde ich Entwurf eines Circulars an die deutschen Regierungen zusammenstellen und vorlegen.

No. 72

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
(Kt) No. 5 Ems, July 9, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station July 10, 6 A.M.

Se. Majestät trägt mir eben für Ew. Excellenz auf:

Graf Benedetti hat Congress gar nicht angedeutet; sagt, er hätte keinen Auftrag als an Weisheit des Königs zu appelliren, um das Wort zu sprechen, das Europa die Ruhe wieder gebe. Der König: nicht Er habe Europa beunruhigt, sondern Herzog v. Gramont; dieser brauche nur auf der Tribüne anzuerkennen, dass Preussen nicht betheiligt, und Europa werde ruhig sein. Graf Benedetti: das werde in Frankreich niemand glauben; der Herzog v. Grammont habe so sprechen müssen, um nicht jeden Halt im Corps législatif zu verlieren und dieses zu viel schlimmeren Erklärungen zu treiben. Der König: Erklärungen des Corps législatif bedeuten nichts; die Worte des Ministers seien très graves. S. Majestät hat dann die Sachlage einfach erzählt: Er sei nicht als König von Preussen, sondern als Haupt der Familie befragt, und habe, als der Prinz nach langer Erwägung sich entschlossen, Seine Einwilligung nicht versagen können, *Seine einmal ertheilte Zustimmung könne Er nicht zurücknehmen;* was

die Hohenzollernschen Fürsten thun werden wüsste Er nicht und könne keinen Einfluss darauf üben.

Benedetti schien zu hoffen, dass die Hohenzollernschen Fürsten S. M. dem Könige einen Verzicht aussprechen würden; und möchte Aeusserung des Fürsten hier erwarten.

Erst *nach der* Unterredung mit Graf Benedetti kamen Ihre Telegramme n. 6 u. 7.[1] Se. Majestät nicht abgeneigt in weiterer Unterredung mit Graf Benedetti ihm Berufung des Reichstags anzudeuten, wenn Frankreich fortfahre zu drohen.

S. Majestät erwartet baldige Vorlage des am Schluss des Telegramms n. 7 verheissenen Circulars an Regierungen; ich setze voraus, dass dadurch die in Telegramm n. 6 aufgetragene vorläufige Informirung unserer Gesandten nicht einzuheben und telegraphire demgemäss an Staatssekretär v. Thile.

No. 73

BARON VON ROSENBERG, Envoy at Stuttgart, to BISMARCK.

No. A 2194 Stuttgart, July 9, 1870

Rec. July 11.

Die Pariser Nachrichten über die Haltung des französischen Cabinets in der spanischen Königsfrage haben hier Aufsehen gemacht. Soweit aus den ersten Anzeigen Schlüsse erlaubt sind, tadeln selbst die antinationalen Partheien das Vorgehen der französischen Staatsmänner und nehmen für Preussen Parthei.

Der Vertreter des, wegen seiner angegriffenen Gesundheit zeitweise abwesenden, Ministers Graf Taube äusserte mir heute die allerdings nur persönliche Ansicht, dass wenn aus der Uebereilungen der französischen Minister Verwickelungen mit Preussen entstehen sollten, letzteres sich in der glücklichen Lage befinden werde, die öffentliche Meinung in ganz Deutschland für sich zu haben. Sollten die Franzosen weiter vorgehen, würde der Allianzvertrag sich sofort wirksam erweisen, und die Franzosen würden auf diese Weise gerade das schneller herbeiführen, was sie stets zu hintertreiben gesucht haben, nehmlich [*sic*] ein Zusammenwirken der deutschen Regierungen.

[1] See Nos. 60 and 71.

No. 74

PRINCE REUSS, Envoy at St. Petersburg, to KING WILLIAM and BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2223 St. Petersburg, July 9, 1870

Rec. at Berlin, July 12.

Seine Majestät der Kaiser haben geruht mich heute nach der grossen Parade in Krassnoje-Sselo zu empfangen, um mir zu erlauben mich zu verabschieden. Seine Majestät sprachen mir länger über die Angelegenheit, welche jetzt die Welt in Unruhe versetzt, nämlich die Candidatur des Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern für die spanische Krone.

Der Kaiser sagte, Er könne nicht begreifen, wie dieser Prinz von der Idee den spanischen Thron zu besteigen so eingenommen sein könnte, dass er Lust hätte sich in diese Galeere zu begeben. Er würde dort nichts erndten als Unannehmlichkeiten und schliesslich vielleicht noch wieder verjagt werden; Er hätte gedacht, dass die Fürstliche Familie bereits an dem rumänischen Thron genug haben dürfte um nicht dasselbe Experiment noch einmal zu versuchen. Die Franzosen, welche unsere Siege vom Jahre 1866 immer noch nicht "verdauen" könnten, glaubten in jener Candidatur eine Intrigue Preussens zu sehen und hätte die dortige Regierung für nöthig gehalten, um ihr Ansehen zu heben, die bekannte Demonstration in der Kammer zu machen; sie hätte dadurch dem Volk zeigen wollen, dass man nicht ein zweites Mal geneigt wäre ruhig und die Hände in der Tasche den preussischen Machinationen zuzusehen.

Er, der Kaiser, glaube nicht, dass Euere Majestät einverstanden mit dem Entschluss des Erbprinzen sein könnten; Euerer Majestät läge es zu fern einen Schritt zu unterstützen, der an und für sich nicht der Sympathien der alten Monarchien erfreuen könnte und der ausserdem leicht zu Complicationen zwischen Preussen und Frankreich führen könnte. Das sei die spanische Krone gewiss nicht werth. Er hoffe daher, dass Euere Majestät für den Fall, dass die Cortes den Prinzen von Hohenzollern wirklich wählen sollten, Sich von diesem Mitglied Allerhöchst-Ihrer Familie lossagen und jedenfalls die Königliche Zustimmung zu jenem Schritt nicht ertheilen würden.

Ich sprach mich Seiner Majestät gegenüber in dem Sinne aus, dass die ganze Sache für die Regierung Euerer Majestät nicht existire und dass Allerhöchstdieselben nicht den Beruf hätten sich in die spanischen Angelegenheiten zu mischen, dass aber der Erbprinz Herr seines Willens wäre und Euere Majestät nicht verhindern könnten, dass derselbe sich in Intriguen einlasse, die uns fern ständen. Euere Majestät könnten wohl einem Mitglied AllerhöchstIhres Hauses befehlen, dieses oder jenes zu thun, nicht aber dieses oder jenes zu unterlassen, und sei es nicht möglich einen Gensdarmen neben den Erbprinzen zu stellen, der ihn verhindern sollte die spanische Krone anzunehmen. Deshalb könnte man Euerer Majestät Regierung nicht verantwortlich für diesen Act machen und, wenn man dies thun zu wollen scheine, so sei das Motiv hierzu höchst verdächtig. Es möchte fast erscheinen als wenn Frankreich wieder einmal einen Streit mit Preussen vom Zaune brechen wollte, da man gewissermassen die Sache damit begonnen habe sie zu verwickeln. Ich erlaubte mir Seine Majestät selbst zum Richter zu machen, ob wir dafür verantwortlich gemacht werden könnten, wenn aus dem heftigen Ton, mit dem man in Paris diese Angelegenheit öffentlich besprochen hat, eine gegenseitige nationale Erbitterung entstehen sollte, die zum Bruche führen könnte; wenn die französische Regierung es für ihre inneren Zustände für nothwendig halte pomphafte und provocante Reden zu halten, so könne ich nicht gut die Verpflichtung Preussens einsehen, der Zielpunkt derartiger Demonstrationen zu sein, die die öffentliche Stimmung nothwendig sehr aufregen müssten.

Der Kaiser erwiederte mir, wenn man uns freilich Händel suchen wolle, so wäre das gar traurig, Preussen sei aber stark genug um vor denselben nicht zurückzuschrecken. Käme der Angriff in dieser Weise von Frankreich, so würde es ganz Deutschland gegen sich haben und ein schweres Spiel finden. Aber zu wünschen wäre es, wenn einer solchen Eventualität ausgewichen, jedenfalls aber alles vermieden würde, was den Franzosen einen Prätext zu Händeln geben könnte. Daher widerhole Er mir seinen Wunsch Euere Majestät möchten recht deutlich zu erkennen geben und aussprechen, dass Allerhöchstdieselben nichts mit

dieser Thron-Candidatur zu thun haben wollten, dann würde ein jeder Prätext verschwunden sein und Frankreich keine äussere Veranlassung haben, sich über die Regierung Euerer Majestät zu beklagen.

Wenn ich die Ansicht Seiner Majestät des Kaisers resumiren darf, so würde ich mich dahin aussprechen, dass Ihm diese Kronenhascherei im höchsten Grade zuwider ist; dass Er eine Zustimmung Euerer Majestät sich nicht für möglich vorstellen kann, weil Er nicht begreift, welches Interesse Preussen dabei haben sollte den spanischen Thron mit einem Hohenzollernschen Prinzen besetzt zu sehen, noch weniger aber, dass man sich für ein solches Ziel den Chancen eines Krieges aussetzen möchte.

Deswegen wünscht der Kaiser, der das grösste Vertrauen in die durchaus friedlichen Absichten Euerer Majestät Regierung hat, dass Allerhöchstdieselben die Absichten des Erbprinzen desavouiren möchten, um hierdurch allen und jeden Prätext von vornherein zu beseitigen.

Liegt es aber wirklich in der Absicht Frankreichs trotz einer solchen Haltung mit uns Händel zu suchen, so sind die Sympathien des Kaisers auf unserer Seite.

Fürst Gortschakoff, welchem ich nach meiner Rückkehr von Krassnoje-Sselo das unterdessen eingegangen Telegramm aus Ems von heute [1] vorgelegt habe, war sehr erfreut über den Inhalt desselben, und bat mich ihm davon Abschrift zu geben, damit er es Seiner Majestät dem Kaiser vorlegen könne.

Ich habe dies *mutatis mutandis* gethan.

Der Kanzler ist je mehr und mehr über das unbedachte Auftreten des französischen Ministeriums ungehalten und sagt, dass wenn man in Frankreich hätte vernünftig sein wollen, so hätte man sich, bevor man in den Kammern diesen grossen Lärmen aufschlug, an die Kabinette wenden müssen und vertraulich über die Angelegenheit gesprochen.

[1] Presumably this refers to Abeken's telegram of July 8, printed above as No. 47.

No. 75

Copy of a despatch of the BELGIAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS to BARON NOTHOMB, Envoy at Berlin, confidentially communicated by the latter to the Prussian Government.

No. A 2243 Brussels, July 9, 1870

Dans un entretien avec notre Ministre à Paris Monsieur le Duc de Gramont a désiré savoir quelle serait l'attitude de la Belgique dans un conflit éventuel entre la France et la Prusse.

"La France, a dit Son Excellence, n'a pas besoin de passer par la Belgique, mais il suffit d'un coup d'œil sur la carte pour se convaincre qu'elle a besoin d'être sûre qu'on ne pourra pas non plus passer par chez vous pour pénétrer chez elle; avez-vous la volonté et le pouvoir de défendre votre neutralité?"

Le Baron Beyens a fait une réponse conforme aux obligations que nous imposent les traités, aux droits qu'ils nous garantissent, à la politique loyale que la Belgique a toujours pratiquée chaque fois que la paix générale a paru menacée.

J'ai cru devoir vous donner connaissance de cet entretien dont vous apprécierez toute l'importance.

B. D'ANETHAN

No. 76

BISMARCK to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2172 Varzin, July 10, 1870

Sent 9.40 A.M. Rec. 12.15 P.M.

Habe an Graf Solms telegraphirt (No. 21): Wenn die Leute offen von Krieg sprechen, so bitte ich trokken [*sic*] und kurz zu antworten, wenn man ihm uns erklärte, so würden wir ihn führen. Wir sind bereit und im Stande uns zu wehren, und wollen Sie darüber niemand in Zweifel lassen, der Sie darauf anredete.

No. 77

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2145, 2146 Ems, July 10, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 10.50 A.M.

Ew. Exc. werden Gr. Solms Telegramme von gestern n. 48 und 49[1] von Berlin erhalten haben. Se. Majestät verlangt Ihre schleunige telegraphische Aeusserung über Inhalt desselben und ob Sie glauben, dass Preussen Vorsichtsmassregeln treffen solle? Rückkehr des Königs nach Berlin vielleicht nöthig. Benedetti sagt in höflicherer Form doch *eigentlich* dasselbe. Von Sigmaringen kommt eben Brief des Fürsten an Majestät: wenn der König es aus höheren Rücksichten fordern, gern bereit zurückzutreten, *freiwillig nicht.* Graf Waldersee à Paris, Werther hier, wird nach Paris abgehen, sobald Ihre Aeusserung eintrifft; hat bis jetzt keine andere Instruction als Ihr Telegramm und Brief an mich vom 5ten.[2] Dass der König abgerathen hatte, ist bis jetzt von hier aus nirgends ausgesprochen. Se. Majestät hat nur an Graf Benedetti gesagt (le balance a longtemps penché au Contre; mais après la résolution du Prince je n'ai pas dit, *non*) "Die Wage hat lange zur Ablehnung geneigt; auf dem Entschluss des Prinzen, habe ich nicht Nein gesagt." An Graf Benedetti wird Se. Majestät jetzt von Berufung des Reichstags sprechen. Congress nach letztem Telegramm von Hr. von Thile in Spanien nicht *unwillkommen* [*sic*], bisher von keiner Seite ausgebracht.[3] Seine Majestät fragt, was nach Ihrer Ansicht dabei von uns geschehen könne?

No. 78

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*
No. 264 Ems Varzin, July 10, 1870
Sent 11.15 A.M. Rec. 12.10 P.M.

Dringend wünschenswerth, dass Freiherr von Werther nach Paris zurückkehre, da Graf Solms von dortiger Situation stark impressionirt scheint.[4]

[1] See Nos. 64 and 65. [2] See Nos. 13 and 16.
[3] *Sic.* Something has obviously been left out in the original.
[4] King William's marginal note: *Das finde ich nicht, da auch Gf. Waldersee Alles bestätigt.*

No. 79

BISMARCK to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2174 Varzin, July 10, 1870
Sent 11.15 A.M. Rec. 2.15 P.M.

Gespräch zwischen Olozaga und Herzog von Gramont in Telegramm No. 14 [1] als Pariser Correspondenz irgendwo zu drucken. Jetzt Zeit, dass officiöse Presse über Herzog von Gramonts Zumuthung und Drohung anschlägt.[2]

No. 80

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2177 Ems, July 10, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 12.10 P.M. Rec. 2.45 P.M.

Wenn Telegramme von Gf. Solms 48 u. 49 [3] etwa nicht schon an Gf. Bismarck weiter telegraphirt, muss es schleunig geschehen, da Majestät seine telegraphische Aeusserung verlangt hat. Se. Majestät befiehlt, dass Sie jetzt dem Staatsministerium schleunig die ganze Sachlage vorlegen, und Hrn. v. Roon auf die (wie es scheint, auch maritimen) Rüstungen Frankreichs aufmerksam machen.

No. 81

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2178 Ems, July 10, 1870
Sent 1.08 P.M. Rec. 2.56 P.M.

Eure Excellenz werden heute Morgen Abschrift eines Telegramms [4] von Gf. Bismarck erhalten haben wegen *Information* unserer Gesandten in Deutschland. In späterem Telegramm [5] sagt Gf. Bismarck, er werde Circular an *Regierungen* entwerfen und vorlegen, sobald er wisse, was Gf. Benedetti hierher gebracht. Der König glaubt dadurch die *Information* der Gesandten im Sinne des ersten Telegramms nicht aufgehoben und erwartet, dass

[1] See No. 65.
[2] Marginal note: *H. Dr. Busch vorzulegen. Thile.*
[3] See Nos. 64 and 65. [4] See No. 60. [5] See No. 71.

Ew. Excellenz das unternehmen. Graf Benedetti sagt in milderer Form eigentlich dasselbe, was die Telegramme von Graf Solms.[1]

No. 82

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2146 Ems, July 10, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 3 P.M.

Se. Majestät fragt ob Ew. Exc. noch für möglich halte, dass Frhr. v. Werther eigenhändigen Brief Sr. Majestät an den Kaiser mit nach Paris nehme? Ferner, ob Preussen, mit Bezug auf Pariser Protokoll von 1856, für Vermeidung des von Frankreich gesuchten Conflicts europäische Mächte anrufen könne und solle.

No. 83

BISMARCK to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2183 Varzin, July 10, 1870
Sent 3.30 P.M. Rec. 6.05 P.M.

Ich stelle einstweilen folgende telegraphische Mittheilung an die süddeutschen Höfe anheim, weiteres Schriftliches vorbehaltend:

Unser Geschäftsträger in Paris ist der Meinung, dass Frankreich uns in Kurzem den Krieg erklären werde; wir theilen dieselbe nicht, doch meinte auch Lord Granville, der Krieg sei in Paris beschlossene Sache. Die Königl. Regierung weiss nicht, wen die Cortes zum König wählen werden, und wird sich, wie bisher, weder fördernd noch hemmend in die Sache mischen, da ihre guten Dienste in dieser rein spanischen Frage durch Herzog von Gramont's drohende Sprache ausgeschlossen. Rüstet Frankreich, so werden wir dasselbe thun müssen, wir zweifeln nicht, dass ein Angriff auf Deutschland dessen Regierungen zur Abwehrung einig und gerüstet finden wird, glauben aber, dass jede in Paris in diesem Sinne von Süddeutschland gegebene Andeutung der Erhaltung des Friedens nützlich sein wird. Bei

[1] Marginal note of Thile: *An Abeken 10/7.70 geantw*[ortet] *dass die Information an die 4 Ges*[andten] *morgen abgeht.*

steigendem Ernst der Lage wird Seine Majestät der König sofort den norddeutschen Reichstag berufen.

Soeben gehen Graf Waldersee's Meldungen über Rüstungen ein. Stelle anheim Inhalt nach München, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe sofort und gleichzeitig mitzutheilen. Diese Meldungen drängen auch Seiner Majestät dem Könige die Entscheidung darüber auf, welche Vorbereitungen gegen Ueberfall etwa in Mainz nöthig sein können.

No. 84

BISMARCK to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2182 Varzin, July 10, 1870
Sent 3.35 P.M. Rec. 6.20 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Graf Benedetti scheint Seiner Majestät die Aufgabe zuwenden zu wollen, eine etwaige Entsagung des Erbprinzen wenn nicht herbeizuführen, so doch entgegenzunehmen und ihm oder nach Paris mitzutheilen. Meines allerunterthänigsten Dafürhaltens sollten keinerlei Aeusserungen des Erbprinzen an französische oder spanische Adresse durch Vermittelung Sr. Majestät oder der Königlichen Gesandtschaften befördert werden.

No. 85

BISMARCK to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2181 Varzin, July 10, 1870
Sent 5.10 P.M. Rec. 6.30 P.M.

Alles auf spanische Frage Bezügliche, auch politische Mittheilungen aus Paris, sind dem Generalstab mitzutheilen.

No. 86

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*
No. 269 Ems Varzin, July 10, 1870
Sent 5.28 P.M. Rec. 7.40 P.M.

Sollte Seine Majestät der König meine Anwesenheit in Ems wünschen, so steht mein Zustand nicht entgegen.

No. 87

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*
No. 270 Ems Varzin, July 10, 1870
Sent 5.45 P.M. Rec. 7.40 P.M.

Antwort auf Telegramm No. 6.[1]
Ich weiss nicht welche Instructionen Freiherr von Werther noch erwartet, und empfehle, dass er auf seinen Posten geht.

No. 88

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*
No. 272 Ems Varzin, July 10, 1870
Sent 7.17 P.M. Rec. 9.30 P.M.

Ich glaube Beides [2] verneinen zu müssen:
Ersteres nach Gramont's Drohungen überhaupt; Letzteres für den Moment, so lange für uns als Basis der Anrufung nur Gramont's und Ollivier's drohende Parlamentsreden geschäftlich vorliegen. Frankreich hat bis dahin, nach der von ihm genommenen Stellung, allein Anlass dazu, oder Spanien.

No. 89

BISMARCK to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. in claris*
No. A 2187 Varzin, July 10, 1870
Sent 8.06 P.M. Rec. 7.15 A.M., July 11.

Ich bitte Nachstehendes den heutigen Blättern und Wolff mitzutheilen.
Das Auswärtige Amt hat den Vertretern des Bundes in Deutschland die Mittheilung zugehen lassen, dass die Verbündeten Regierungen und im Besondern die Königl. Preussische sich jeder Einwirkung auf die spanische Königswahl und auf deren eventuelle Annahme oder Ablehnung durch einen der zu wählenden, bisher enthalten haben und auch ferner enthalten werden, indem sie diese Angelegenheit als eine ausschliesslich Spanien und demnächst gewählten Thron-Candidaten persönlich

[1] See No. 77. [2] See No. 82.

angehende, jederzeit betrachtet und behandelt haben, wie das die Achtung vor der Unabhängigkeit Spaniens von selbst bedürfe. Vorstehendes sei der Kais. Französischen Regierung bekannt, wenn auch eingehendere und vertrauliche Erörterungen durch den Ton verhindert worden seien, in welchem diese Angelegenheit von Hause aus durch französische Minister öffentlich besprochen worden.[1]

No. 90

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2182 Berlin, July 10, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 8.45 P.M. Rec. on the morning of July 11.

Graf Bismarck telegraphirt Folgendes, ohne hinzuzufügen, dass gleiche Mittheilung direct nach Ems gegangen: Graf Benedetti scheint Seiner Majestät die Aufgabe zuwenden zu wollen . . . [etc. as in No. 84.][2]

No. 91

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2186 London, July 10, 1870

Sent 9 P.M. Rec. July 11, 3.25 A.M.

M^is de la Valette [3] sagt ganz laut, dass Frankreich unmittelbar Krieg beginnen werde, wenn der Erbprinz von Hohenzollern gewählt werde und nicht zurücktrete.

Rothschild'sche Briefe aus Paris von gestern sagen, dass wenn die Antwort, welche Graf Benedetti in Ems erhalten werde, nicht ganz befriedigend sei, sofort Befehl zur Mobilisirung der französischen Armee werde gegeben werden. Zugleich würden die Truppen an die preussische Grenze rücken und die Regierung

[1] July 11, at 9 P.M., Thile telegraphed this statement to his diplomatic agents at Munich, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Dresden, and Brussels, "zu Ihrer Information und um sich vorkommenden Falles zu äussern."

[2] King William's marginal comment: *Nach Madrid muss der Erbprinz direct sich aussprechen; erzählen kann man hier an Benedetti was geschehen ist.*

[3] French ambassador at London.

einen Credit von der Kammer fordern, welcher mit grosser Majorität bewilligt werden würde.

Telegramm von Madrid an dasselbe Haus stellt die Verwerfung des Erbprinzen durch die Cortes als unwahrscheinlich dar.

No. 92

LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2185 Varzin, July 10, 1870

Sent 10 P.M. Rec. July 11, 7.25 A.M.

Folgendes ist gestern nach Ems telegraphirt:

Telegramm No. 6 [1] erhalten. Ich schlage vor, die Meldungen über Rüstungen vertraulich in London, Petersburg, Madrid mitzutheilen, ihren Inhalt . . . in der Presse zu veröffentlichen ohne Quellenangabe. Ob Gegenmassregeln nöthig ist militairische Frage. Aus politischen Gründen verschieben was militairisch geboten wäre gefährlich. Militairisch scheint mir nützlich, dass Seine Majestät in Ems bleiben, vielleicht Freiherrn von Moltke citiren. Graf Solms nervös, seine Angaben haben für mich keinen anderen Inhalt als seine eigene Emotion. Graf Waldersee kenne ich wenig. Positiv sagt er nur, dass die Eisenbahnen avisirt seien; das ist wohlfeil und können wir auch. Politisch wäre unsere Lage durch französischen Ueberfall sehr günstig. Fürst und namentlich Erbprinz müssen wegen Zurücktreten selbst wissen, was sie zu thun haben. Seine Majestät kann der öffentlichen Meinung Deutschlands wegen keinen Ansichtswechsel kundgeben; was Fürst oder Erbprinz in dieser Beziehung thun hat kein amtliches und monarchisches Gewicht für Deutschland. Dass der Fürst dem König diese Entscheidung zumuthet, scheint mir kein hübscher Zug. Ich empfehle nicht zu antworten.

[1] This clearly refers to the despatch printed under No. 77 above (of July 10), in spite of the "gestern" in the preceding phrase.

No. 93

HERR VON BÜLOW to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State.
Ad No. A 2151 Berlin, July 10, 1870

In Folge des in dem Telegramme aus Varzin No. 15 [1] enthaltenen Auftrages des H. Chefs habe ich mich nach Bestimmung Ew. Exc. heute in aller Frühe zu dem Ober-Baudirector Weishaupt, sowie zu dem Obersten v. Stiehle und dem Ob.-Lieutenant Meydam begeben. Letzterer vertritt den in Tegernsee befindlichen General v. Chauvin.

Herr Weishaupt äusserte sich dahin, die anbefohlene Ueberwachung des Militair-Eisenbahn-Transport-Materials in Frankreich werde sich am besten durch diejenigen Beamten incognito ins Werk setzen lassen, welche im Jahre 1867 bei der Luxemburg-Affaire mit dem gleichen Auftrage betraut gewesen. Er werde sofort sein damals gesammeltes Material heraussuchen, sich von Graf Itzenplitz die nöthigen Vollmachten geben lassen und die betreffenden Beamten beordern, von denen hoffentlich nicht zu viele auf Sommerurlaub sein würden. Behufs einheitlichen Vorgehens verabredeten wir schliesslich, dass ich dem Obersten v. Stiehle eine Besprechung mit ihm (Weishaupt) und H. Meydam heute zwischen 11 u. 12 Uhr auf dem Generalstabe vorschlagen solle.

Oberst v. Stiehle, den ich demnächst aufsuchte, war mit diesem Vorschlage einverstanden und behielt sich vor nach der Conferenz bei Ew. Exc. vorzusprechen, um über dem Ergebniss zu berichten. Dabei würde dann auch die Frage der Rückberufung des Generals v. Moltke aus Kreisan (?) [*sic*] in Schlesien zu erwägen sein, welche H. v. Stiehle für den Moment noch nicht für indicirt erachtete. Er meinte, es werde genügen, ihm zunächst einen Officier mit dem Varziner Telegramm und einen Chiffre zu senden. Eiliger scheine ihm die Rückberufung des Majors v. Brandt aus Ocynhausen. Oberst v. Stiehle bemerkte noch, in Erwartung eines früheren oder späteren Krieges mit Frankreich sei auf dem Generalstabe alles fertig; durch einen günstigen

[1] See No. 68.

Zufall sei überdies der Major Krause, welcher neben dem dienstlich (Generalstabsreise) abwesenden Major v. Brandenstein das Eisenbahnwesen im grossen Generalstabe bearbeite, schon vor Eintritt der jetzigen Complication nach Paris gegangen und noch dort. Dem Major Gfn. Waldersee ständen drei gewandte Generalstabs-Officiere zur Seite, die die französische Armee kennten und eingeschult wären.

Ob.-Lieutenant Meydam wollte um so mehr an der vorgedachten Conferenz Theil nehmen, als er ziemlich neu in den Geschäften sei und sich über seine Aufgabe zu informiren wünschte. Er fasste letztere vorläufig dahin auf, die Telegraphen-Beamten an der Grenze zu sorgfältiger Beobachtung und telegraphischer Einberichtung aller Vorgänge, sowie dazu zu veranlassen, dass sie die Mittheilungen unserer Agenten weitergäben.

No. 94

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to ABEKEN.

No. 308 Ems — Berlin, July 10, 1870

Sent in the evening.

Die beiden Einlagen sind das wesentlichste Ergebniss der in der heutigen Anzeige von H. v. Bülow (Ad A. 2151) erwähnten Besprechung der Herren v. Stiehle, Weishaupt und Meydam, uber welche ersterer mir heute Mittag Mittheilung machte.

Oberst v. Stiehle versicherte mir, dass auf dem Generalstabe *Alles bereit sei.* Er wird in Gemässheit einer Weisung[1] des Grafen Bismarck fortan von allen wichtigeren Hispanicis in Kenntniss gesetzt, auch zu der morgenschen Staats-Ministerial-Sitzung zugezogen werden.

Major v. Brandt ist zurückgerufen; an General v. Moltke wird vorläufig ein Chiffre gesandt, nebst entsprechender brieflicher Mittheilung von Herr v. Stiehle.

Einlage I

COLONEL VON STIEHLE to GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ at Vienna.

July 10, 1870

Ew. Exc. erlaube ich mir in Abwesenheit des General von Moltke, die diesseits obwaltende Ansicht darzulegen, dass der Eintritt *effec-*

[1] See No. 85.

tiver Rüstungen in Oesterreich uns als das Hauptsympton gilt, ob Frankreich blos Staub aufwirbele oder ernst machen will . . .

Einlage

COLONEL VON STIEHLE to GRAF VON WALDERSEE at Paris.

July 10, 1870

Ew. Exc. theile ich ergebenst mit, dass Behufs Beobachtung der Eisenbahnbewegung (Transportmaterial) etwa am 12ⁿ d. 2 höhere Eisenbahnbeamte sich bei Ihnen einfinden werden; . . . sie werden sich einführen als "ein Herr aus Cassel" und "ein Herr aus Saarbrück," um namentlich die Modalitäten zu verabreden, wie am besten ihre Nachrichten hierher gelangen könnten . . .

No. 95

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2152 Berlin, July 10, 1870

Gives him the same short explanation as to the Prussian standpoint in the Spanish question that had previously been sent to Canitz, Reuss, and Bernstorff.

No. 96

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2219 Paris, July 10, 1870

Rec. at Ems July 11. Rec. at Berlin July 12. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Gestern früh kam der Dr. Kern, langjähriger Gesandter der Schweiz, zu mir. Gramont hatte ihm gesagt, wenn der Erbprinz von Hohenzollern nicht zurücktrete, so werde Frankreich nicht an Spanien sondern an Preussen den Krieg machen.

Herr Kern kam von Herrn Olozaga, dem Gramont in gleichem Sinne gesprochen. Beide haben die Ueberzeugung, dass Frankreich die Gelegenheit bei den Haaren herbeiziehen wolle, den Krieg gegen Preussen zu provociren.

Ich besuchte hierauf Herrn Olozaga. Er hatte dem Herzog von Gramont die Thron-Candidatur des Erbprinzen offiziell angezeigt. Er hat dazu bemerkt, dass der General Prim nur

vermuthet hat, der Candidat könne der französischen Regierung insofern bedenklich erscheinen parce qu'il y a un peu de prussien in dem Erbprinzen; er habe aber die Vortheile, welche diese Kandidatur biete, für so überwiegend angesehen, dass er es sich nicht habe träumen lassen, in Frankreich einen solchen Sturm zu erregen. Prim sei kein Politiker und mache sich keine Idee von den Auffassungen des Auslandes.

Herzog von Gramont hat geantwortet, die Erklärung der französischen Regierung im Corps législatif sei die einzige Antwort die er zu geben. Frankreich werde sich nicht in die spanischen Entschliessungen mischen und die freundschaftlichen Beziehungen nach Möglichkeit pflegen. Wenn aber der Erbprinz von Hohenzollern bei der Annahme der Krone beharre, werde Frankreich an Preussen den Krieg erklären. Er [Olozaga] könne dem Herzog nicht verhehlen, dass das Vorgehen Frankreichs dazu beitragen werde, dem Candidaten eine überwiegende Stimmenzahl zuzuführen.

Dem Herrn Okouneff, russischen Geschäftsträger, hat Herzog von Gramont in gleichem Sinne gesprochen. Sehr violent gegen Preussen, dass wenn der Hohenzoller nicht beseitigt werde, man uns sofort den Krieg machen werde. Mit Spanien dagegen würde man auf freundschaftlichem Fusse bleiben, man würde fortfahren, die politischen Gefangenen zu interniren.

Chevalier Nigra bestätigt mir dasselbe und war sehr besorgt, unsere Allerhöchste Regierung möchte sich die gravité der Situation nicht klar machen. Zu der Besorgniss, welche dieser Diplomat an den Tag legte, habe ich durch Zufall einen Commentar erhalten. Herr Nigra hat nämlich einer ihm intim befreundeten Person gesagt, ein Krieg, der zwischen Preussen und Frankreich über *diese* Frage entbrennt, sei ihm deshalb so odios, weil Italien sich in der traurigen Nothwendigkeit befinden würde, undankbar gegen Preussen sein zu müssen und sich auf Seiten Frankreichs zu stellen.

Ich habe bis jetzt weder den Herzog von Gramont noch Herrn Ollivier aufsuchen können, weil ich nicht würde vermeiden können, die Deklaration zu berühren und ich über diesen Punkt keine Instruktion habe.

Die Königliche Regierung wünscht, dass die Botschaft die Diskussion über die spanische Frage besser vermeide und ich nur für den Fall mit Weisung versehen bin, dass man mir gegenüber die Frage zur Sprache bringt. Da ich mithin in der Krisis die Geschäfte übernahm, ohne bisher in der Lage gewesen zu sein, mit den hiesigen, jetzt leitenden Staatsmännern nähere Bekanntschaft zu machen, so fehlt mir ein wesentlicher Moment, mir über die Intentionen der Regierung aus eigener Anschauung ein Urtheil zu bilden. Dagegen hat der Königliche Botschafter mit dem Herzog von Gramont sowohl wie mit Herrn Ollivier die Frage bei ihrem Beginn eingehend besprochen. Er kennt diese Herren. Aus diesem Grunde glaube ich würde es besser und mir sehr erwünscht sein, wenn der Königliche Botschafter wieder nach Paris zurückkehren wollte. Man ist hier in dem Glauben, dem Königlichen Botschafter sehr bestimmte Fragen und Aufträge nach Ems mitgegeben zu haben, deren Beantwortung man augenscheinlich erwartete. Es scheint also ein Missverständniss vorzuliegen, auf welches ich durch mein Telegramm No. 47 [1] gehorsamst aufmerksam machen zu sollen glaubte.

Meiner Ueberzeugung nach kommt es hier nicht mehr auf die Frage an, ob und wie weit wir bei der spanischen Angelegenheit interessirt sind und mitgewirkt haben. Die französische Regierung ist nach innen befestigt. Sie will einen politischen Success nach aussen haben durch Beseitigung der Hohenzollernschen Candidatur. Erreicht sie diesen Success nicht, so ist sie zu weit gegangen um zurückzuweichen und hält den Moment für günstig, Preussen zu bekriegen. Man will Success oder Krieg, und den letzteren vielleicht noch lieber als den ersten.

Die Absicht Spanien zu liebkosen und dafür Preussen zu bekriegen, weil dort der Thron-Candidat lebt, den Spanien sich auserwählt, ist so sinnlos und unlogisch, dass sich die Sache nur mit der Absicht den Krieg mit den Haaren herbeizuführen erklären lässt.

Die hiesigen Diplomaten sehen in der freiwilligen Entsagung des Erbprinzen den einzigen Weg die Sache friedlich zu lösen.

[1] See No. 48.

No. 97

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2220 Paris, July 10, 1870

Rec. at Ems July 11. Rec. at Berlin July 12.

Eurer Excellenz beehre ich mich anliegend einen dem *Moniteur universel* entnommenen Artikel gehorsamst einzureichen, in welchem bereits vom Prager Frieden und Mainz gesprochen wird. Der *Moniteur* ist das Blatt Ollivier's. Ich halte mich für verpflichtet, grade auf diesen Artikel aufmerksam zu machen, weil mir aus sehr gut unterrichteter Quelle gemeldet wird, dieser Artikel sei, bevor er abgedruckt wurde, im Ministerrath vorgelesen worden.

No. 98

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2221 Paris, July 10, 1870

Rec. at Ems July 11. Rec. at Berlin July 12.

Herr Stradt, rumänischer Agent in Paris, sagte gestern dem Konsul Bamberg, dass er heute nach Sigmaringen reise, um dem Fürsten von Hohenzollern mitzutheilen, dass die rumänischen Prätendenten oder deren Agenten der französischen Regierung Offerten gemacht haben, bezüglich einer Insurrection in Rumänien zum Zwecke des Sturzes des Fürsten Carl.

Hiermit stimmt eine mir von anderer Seite zugegangene Mittheilung überein, ein rumänischer Offizier habe in der Weinlaune ausgeplaudert, dass er täglich mit dem Fürsten Metternich verhandle über die in Rumänien zu organisirende Militair-Insurrection.

Ich will hierbei nicht unerwähnt lassen, dass man geflissentlich verbreitet, die Hohenzollernsche Intrigue gehe von der Erbprinzessin aus. Die Gräfin von Flandern habe die Sache begünstigt, der König der Belgier habe darüber mit der Königin von England verhandelt und so sei die Sache zu Stande gekommen. . . .

No. 99

Report of MAJOR COUNT WALDERSEE on the Situation at Paris.
No. A 2222 Paris, July 10, 1870
Rec. at Ems July 11. Rec. at Berlin July 12.

. . . Alle Partheien halten den Krieg für unvermeidlich, die Organe der Regierung predigen ihn mit Fanatismus. . . . Aus mehrfachen Andeutungen ziehe ich den Schluss, dass in Betracht gezogen wird durch Belgien gegen den Unterrhein zu avanciren. . . . Ganz augenscheinlich hat die chauvinistische Parthei so entschieden die Oberhand gewonnen, dass man sich des Eindrucks nicht erwehren kann, dass der Krieg eine beschlossene Sache ist. Es ist dies keine persönliche Auffassung meinerseits, sondern die Ansicht ruhiger Beobachter aus verschiedenen Kreisen.

Die beiden englischen Militair-Attachees, die durch langjährigen Aufenthalt hier sich eine gute Kenntniss der Verhältnisse und Personen verschafft haben, sind derselben Meinung.

Endlich muss ich noch einmal betonen, wie in früheren Berichten, dass wir mit schnellen Entschlüssen und durchgreifenden Massnahmen noch immer den Franzosen den Vorsprung abgewinnen.

Die eigentliche Mobilmachung hat heute hier noch keinenfalls begonnen, so dass noch kein Zeitverlust für uns entstanden ist.

Denkt man sich beide Armeen zu ein und demselben Moment vom Zustande des Friedens zur Mobilmachung übergehend, so sind die günstigen Chancen auf unserer Seite.

No. 100

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
(Kt) No. 8 Ems, July 11, 1870[1]

Telegramm no. 11[2] erhalten.

[1] This telegram bears the note, in Abeken's handwriting: *Cessat* (i.e., countermanded, without being sent). On the other hand, Keudell seems to acknowledge that Bismarck had received it, for his telegram of 12.40 P.M. (see No. 107 below) begins, *Telegramm no. 8 erhalten.* "8" here, however, may be a mistake for "9," the number of Abeken's next telegram (see No. 101 below), which in content seems more closely related to Keudell's reply than does the real "No. 8."

[2] See No. 84.

Seine Majestät mit Schluss ganz einverstanden; bemerkt also, dass Benedetti geradezu darauf dringt, dass der König dem Erbprinzen Annahme verbiete, oder ihn zum Verzicht bewege. — Mittheilungen an die deutschen Regierungen [1] und Telegramm v. 11 [2] haben Se. Majestät genehmigt und in Berlin aufgetragen. Wegen Mainz Einleitungen getroffen. Der König hat Oberst Stranz nach Sigmaringen geschickt, ohne Auftrag, und damit der Fürst sich mündlich aussprechen könne.

No. 101

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. 269 Ems Ems, July 11, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 5.30 A.M.

Da Ihre Gesundheit es erlaubt, wünscht Se. Majestät, dass Ew. Exc. nach Ems komme, dann also auch so bald als möglich.[3]

No. 102

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2191 Ems, July 11, 1870
Sent 7 A.M. Rec. 10.25 A.M.

Folgendes Telegramm [4] des Herrn Grafen von Bismarck hierher hat Genehmigung Seiner Majestät gefunden und Seine Majestät beauftragt Ew. Excellenz die darin vorgeschlagenen Mittheilungen zu machen; nur sollen Sie nicht sagen: wir theilen den Glauben an Krieg nicht — sondern: es erscheint unglaublich, . . .[5]

[1] See No. 83. [2] No. 92 (?).

[3] Marginal note in Abeken's hand: *Von Sr. Majestät durch Genl. v. Treskow mir so aufgetragen, 10/7 Abds. 10 1/2 Uhr.*

[4] See No. 83.

[5] Thile then transmitted this to Munich, Stuttgart, and Dresden to correct the telegrams already sent out (see No. 103).

No. 103

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to BARON VON WERTHERN, Envoy at Munich, BARON VON ROSENBERG, Envoy at Stuttgart, COUNT VON FLEMMING, Envoy at Karlsruhe, and HERR VON EICHMANN, Envoy at Dresden.

Ad No. A 2183 Berlin, July 11, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 8.40 A.M. Sent to Dresden, 10.15 A.M.

(Transmits Bismarck's draft circular of the preceding day [see No. 83], with the instruction:) Theilen Sie dies dort unverzüglich mit, weiteres Schriftliches vorbehaltend.

Von zuverlässiger Seite geht uns aus Paris die Mittheilung zu, dass im französischen Kriegsministerium und Marineministerium umfangreiche Vorbereitungen zur Führung eines grossen Krieges im Gange sind. Reserven sind noch nicht einberufen, doch hat es den Anschein, dass Truppenbewegungen bereits beginnen. Die Eisenbahnen sollen davon avisirt und Neigung vorhanden sein, mit unmobilen Truppen loszuschlagen.

Theilen Sie auch Vorstehendes unverzüglich mit.

No. 104

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2192 Ems, July 11, 1870

Sent 9.25 A.M. Rec. 10.36 A.M.[1]

Für Kriegsminister v. Roon, in dessen Abwesenheit an General v. Podbielski.

Die Nachrichten aus Paris, welche Ew. Excellenz durch das Auswärtige Ministerium mitgetheilt worden sind, erfordern dass diejenigen Maassregeln vorbereitet werden, welche zur Sicherheit der Rheinprovinz, Mainz und Saarlouis nothwendig werden könnten. Se. Majestät der König erwarten hierüber umgehend entsprechende Vorschläge, eventuell telegraphisch.

(Gez.) v. TRESKOW.

(Gez.) ABEKEN.

[1] The text of this telegram has been printed by J. von Verdy du Vernois, *With the Royal Headquarters in 1870–71*, p. 5.

No. 105

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2197 Ems, July 11, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 10.10 A.M. Sent 11 A.M. Rec. 12.12 P.M.

(The King agrees to Bismarck's telegram [see No. 92], and Thile is to act upon it: news as to French armaments is to be sent to London, St. Petersburg, Madrid, and given to the press.) [1]

No. 106

GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2202 Vienna, July 11, 1870
Sent 11.30 A.M. Rec. 1.35 P.M.

Verkehr der französischen Botschaft mit Staatskanzlei so lebhaft, Depeschen aus Paris so zahlreich, dass man militairische Verabredungen als ihren Gegenstand vermuthen möchte. . . .

No. 107

HERR VON KEUDELL [2] to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. in claris*
No. 295 Ems Varzin, July 11, 1870
12.40 P.M.

Telegramm no. 8 [3] erhalten. Graf von Bismarck wird morgen reisen, ob ohne Aufenthalt wird von Wirkung der Reise abhängen, die bei Culmination der Carlsbader Kur nach mehreren schlechten Nächten und starker Blutaufregung doch nicht unbedenklich. Fur heute zu spät.

No. 108

BARON VON CANITZ, Envoy at Madrid, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2230 Madrid, July 11, 1870
Sent 1.25 P.M. Rec. at Berlin 11.55 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Auf ihre Mittheilung der Hohenzollernschen Throncandidatur hat die spanische Regierung *abrathende* Antwort erhalten von England und Russland, befriedigende von Italien, Belgien und Holland, von Frankreich aber bis gestern Abend kein Wort. . . .

[1] Thile carried out this instruction that afternoon.
[2] One of Bismarck's personal adjutants. [3] See No. 100.

No. 109

BARON VON CANITZ, Envoy at Madrid, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2231 Madrid, July 11, 1870
Sent 1.25 P.M. Rec. July 12, 12.05 A.M.

Die Union libérale in den Cortes ist die Partei von deren Haltung das Ergebniss in der Abstimmung über die Candidatur abhängen wird. Ein Mitglied derselben, welches für den Prinzen stimmen wird, verhehlte mir gestern nicht, dass viele Mitglieder seiner Partei nach dem, was in Frankreich vorgeht, unsicher und sich wahrscheinlich der Abstimmung enthalten würden. Er selbst glaubt nicht mehr an eine Majorität von 176 Stimmen. Die Regierung dagegen glaubt auch heute noch auf über 200 Stimmen zählen zu können.[1]

No. 110

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to: 1. GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN; 2. LEGATIONSRAT BUCHER; 3. COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris.
(Kt) No. 19 Ems Berlin, July 11, 1870
(Kt) No. 20 Varzin
(Kt) No. 23 Paris
Sent to the Tg. Station 1.45 P.M.

Der französische Geschäftsträger hat heute *in Gegenwart des Oesterreichischen* (ad 1 u. 2 "an Rascon," ad 3 "einem anderen Diplomaten") Folgendes gesagt: "die Aeusserungen des Königs an Benedetti sind vague und ausweichend, der Min.-Präsident ist nicht hier, daher Geschäfte zu machen unmöglich. Benedetti wird also abreisen und *wir* sind hier auch unnöthig."

Der Angeredete schliesst daraus, dass Le Sourd abreisen oder sich unsichtbar machen wolle, um *factischen* Abbruch der diplomatischen Beziehungen herbeizuführen.

Ich gebe Mittheilung und Deutung ohne Gewährleistung.

[1] This telegram was transmitted from Berlin to Abeken July 12, 9.50 A.M.

No. 111

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2216 Ems, July 11, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 2 P.M. Sent 3.59 P.M. Rec. 7.13 P.M.

Sofort! Nicht wissend ob Graf Bismarck noch durch den Telegraphen zu erreichen, telegraphire ich Folgendes *nur* nach Berlin mit Bitte, entweder weiter zu telegraphiren oder bei Ankunft vorzulegen. Seine Majestät schickt mir eben, nachdem Er Graf Benedetti zum zweiten Male gesehen, durch Freiherrn von Werther, mit Auftrag telegraphischer Mittheilung an Graf Bismarck, folgendes Billet: "Der scharfen Pression Graf Benedetti's habe Ich *widerstanden*, die er dahin feststellt, dass Ich ihn autorisire nach Paris zu telegraphiren, Ich würde auf den Erbprinzen dringen, seiner Candidatur zu entsagen. Alles, sagte Ich, was er nach Paris mittheilen könne, wäre, dass, da der Candidat auf Reisen sei, Ich nicht hoffen könne, vor morgen oder 24 Stunden die Ansicht desselben kennen zu lernen."

Freiherr v. Werther reist heute Abend ab.[1]

No. 112

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2212 Paris, July 11, 1870
Sent 3.10 P.M. Rec. 6.15 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Graf Waldersee meldet: Es ist noch kein Truppentheil bewegt, keine Reserven einbeordert; aber alle fertig zu totaler Mobilmachung überzugehen.

In Toulon und Brest haben Schiffsausrüstungen begonnen.

No. 113

GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2209 Vienna, July 11, 1870
Sent 3.45 P.M. Rec. 5.37 P.M.

Graf Beust[2] sagt mir: "Fürst Metternich[3] telegraphirt:

[1] This telegram was forwarded that night to Varzin.
[2] Austro-Hungarian chancellor. [3] Austro-Hungarian ambassador at Paris.

'Nach einem schwer zu entziffernden Telegramm aus Ems hat der König Graf Benedetti zugegeben, dass Seine Majestät die Erlaubniss zur Annahme ertheilt habe; wenn eine befriedigende Antwort lange ausbleibt, erwarten Sie eine plötzliche Lösung (brusque solution.)' "

No. 114

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2214 Paris, July 11, 1870

Sent 4.05 P.M. Rec. 6.27 P.M. (Duplicates to Ems and Varzin.)

Herzog von Gramont hat soeben im gesetzgebenden Körper erklärt: Gouvernement theilt die Präoccupationen des Landes, ist jetzt aber nicht in der Lage zu antworten. Antwort wird in kurzem erwartet, von der das Schicksal abhängt. Alle Regierungen denen Mittheilung gemacht ist, erkennen Gerechtigkeit der französischen Sache an.

No. 115

BARON VON WERTHERN, Envoy at Munich, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2213 Munich, July 11, 1870

Sent 4.50 P.M. Rec. 6.33 P.M.

Graf Bray [1] versichert, dem M^is^ de Cadore [2] gestern gesagt zu haben, dass ein Angriff Frankreichs Deutschland einig finden werde.

No. 116

GENERAL VON ROON, Minister of War, to KING WILLIAM. *Tg. Cph.*

Ad No. A 2192 Berlin, July 11, 1870

Sent 5.10 P.M.[3]

Nach Erwägung der durch das Telegramm [4] von heute früh erwähnten Angelegenheit, im Einvernehmen mit den hier

[1] Bavarian Minister of Foreign Affairs. [2] French envoy at Munich.

[3] Printed in part in J. von Verdy du Vernois, *op. cit.*, pp. 5, 6.

[4] See No. 104.

anwesenden Staatsministern, Herrn von Thile, General von Podbielski, und Oberst Stiehle, stelle Eurer Majestät ich unterthänigst anheim, einstweilen von Specialmassregeln Abstand zu nehmen, weil Saarlouis binnen 24 Stunden sturmfrei, und das fünf Märsche von der Grenze gelegene Mainz in 48 Stunden mit hinreichender immobiler Besatzung versehen sein kann.

Militairische Partialmassregeln unsererseits würden eben dergleichen feindlicher Seits hervorrufen, und wir würden unaufhaltsam in den Krieg treiben. Halten Eure Majestät nach bestimmten Nachrichten von effectiven französischen Massregeln den Krieg für unvermeidlich, so würde nur die Mobilmachung der gesammten Armee mit einem Schlage als rathsam angesehen werden können.[1]

Vielleicht würde der Krieg und die Mobilmachung vermieden, wenn Eure Majestät die Absicht aussprechen, nöthigenfalls den Reichstag zu berufen.

Soll ich zur Vertretung dieser Ansicht nach Ems kommen, oder würde das zu demonstrativ angesehen werden können.[2]

Soll das Uebungsgeschwader zurückkehren, so bitte ich es zu befehlen.

No. 117

BISMARCK to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State. *Tg. in claris*
No. A 2211 Varzin, July 11, 1870
Sent 6 P.M.

Ich habe No. 20[3] erhalten. Inhalt vollkommen gleichgültig. Lassen Sie geschehen was geschieht.

(King William's marginal notes): [1] *Richtig.* [2] *Würde dies mit Gf. Bismarck zu besprechen haben!*

[3] See No. 110.

No. 118

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT DELBRÜCK, President of the Federal Chancellery. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2225 Varzin, July 11, 1870
Sent 7 P.M. Rec. 9.30. P.M.

Telegramm erhalten. Wir werden, wenn die Dinge in Paris nicht eine andere Wendung nehmen, in diesen Tagen den Reichstag einberufen müssen. Ich bin Dienstag Abends in Berlin.

No. 119

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2228 Ems, July 11, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 8.10 P.M. Sent 9.38 P.M. Rec. 11.55 P.M.

Telegramm No. 18[1] gestern Abend schon direct aus Varzin gekommen; Seine Majestät erklärte Sich einverstanden. Die später aus Berlin gekommene Ausfertigung[2] dem Könige nochmals vorgelegt, erhalte ich mit folgendem Allerhöchstem Marginal zurück: "nach Madrid muss der Erbprinz direct sich aussprechen,[3] *erzählen* kann man hier an Graf Benedetti was geschehen ist."

Graf Benedetti hat heute nach Audienz an Freiherrn von Werther gesagt, er nehme es auf sich noch 24 Stunden hier zu bleiben;[4] in Paris erwarte man Antwort schon heute.

Seine Majestät hatte gestern an Fürst von Hohenzollern geschrieben: Stellung sei wie vorher; bei dem Fürsten Entscheidung, bei ihm Zustimmung.[5]

No. 120

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. in claris*
(Kz) No. 54 Ems, July 11, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 8.10 P.M.

Freiherr von Werther seit einer Stunde fort; unterwegs anhalten will Majestät nicht.

[1] See No. 84. [2] See No. 90.
(Bismarck's marginal notes): [3] *Aussprechen? Warum? worüber? und was?* [4] *Sehr gütig!*
[5] Bismarck has underlined *Zustimmung*, with the marginal note: *zu was???*

No. 121

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London. *Tg. Cph.*
(Kt) No. 2 Ems, July 11, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 8.10 P.M.

Se. Majestät befiehlt, dass Flotte weitere Befehle in Plymouth erwarte.

No. 122

HERR VON EICHMANN, Envoy at Dresden, to BISMARCK.
No. A 2251 Dresden, July 11, 1870
Rec. July 12.

. . . Im Laufe des Tages habe ich alsdann dem den Minister von Friesen [1] vertretenden Minister von Nostitz-Wallwitz Eurer Excellenz Telegramme [2] . . . mitgetheilt. Herr von Nostitz sagte, dass er sogleich den Inhalt meiner Mittheilung zur Kenntniss Seiner Majestät des Königs von Sachsen, Allerhöchstwelcher heute eine Reise in das Innere des Landes angetreten hat, bringen werde. Der Minister sah mit Schmerz die Möglichkeit eines nahen Krieges vor sich, welcher den eben wieder beginnenden Aufschwung der gewerblichen Thätigkeit hemmen werde. Er meinte, dass, wenn es doch zum Kriege mit Frankreich kommen müsste, er es vorgezogen hätte, dass dieser um die Luxemburger Frage ausgebrochen wäre, wo es sich um ein der Nation verständliches Interesse handelte, während diese die spanische Frage mit Gleichgültigkeit betrachtete. . . . Herr von Nostitz bemerkte, dass es sehr wichtig sein würde, der deutschen Nation es klar zum Bewusstsein zu bringen, dass wir nicht um der Hohenzollernschen Thron-Candidatur willen, sondern um einen uns ins Land fallenden Feind abzuwehren, in den Krieg gingen. . . .

[1] Saxon Minister of Foreign Affairs. [2] See Nos. 102 and 103.

No. 123

Report of VON LOOS, Prussian Military Plenipotentiary at Stuttgart.
No. A 2277 Stuttgart, July 11, 1870
Rec. July 13.

(Sums up his impressions as to the attitude of the Württemberg government in case of a Franco-Prussian war.)

. . . Der Casus Fœderis wird keiner weiteren Erwägung unterzogen werden, wenn Oesterreich im Falle eines Krieges zwischen Preussen und Frankreich nicht eine Preussen feindliche Stellung einzunehmen vermag.

Anders würde es sich wohl gestalten, wenn sich Oesterreich in der Lage befinden sollte, sich unbehindert an einer Action gegen Preussen zu betheiligen.

Die württembergische Regierung würde alsdann voraussichtlich den Versuch machen, so lange als möglich eine zuwartende Stellung einzunehmen, sie dürfte in diesem Falle ihrer Vertragspflicht aber dennoch genügen, wenn ihr beim erstern Zögern durch ein preussisches Ultimatum begegnet wird.

Der Standpunkt der württembergischen Regierung giebt sich einigermaassen dadurch zu erkennen, dass schon jetzt vor Allem wieder daran gedacht wird, den Sonderinteressen Rechnung zu tragen.

No. 124

GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)
No. A 2287 Vienna, July 11, 1870
Rec. July 13.

Graf Beust sagte mir, er habe heute ein Telegramm des Fürsten Metternich erhalten, folgenden Inhalts:

"Benedetti meldet in einem schwer zu entziffernden Telegramm, Seine Majestät der König habe ihm zugegeben, dass Er dem Prinzen von Hohenzollern die Erlaubniss zur Annahme der spanischen Krone ertheilt; si une réponse satisfaisante se fait attendre, préparez Vous à une brusque solution."

Graf Beust äusserte: wenn der König sagte, er nehme jene Erlaubniss zurück, so könnte der Krieg, dem jedes Object entzogen würde, vermieden werden; und, fuhr der Graf fort, Sie sind so stark, dass Sie das wohl thun könnten.

Ich antwortete: wenn man, wie wir, vierzehn Tage hindurch mit den Worten "der Starke weicht muthig zurück" verhöhnt worden ist, so passirt Einem das nicht wieder.

Ich sprach die Vermuthung aus, der Prinz, mit dem ich so lange in demselben Regiment gedient, werde vielleicht freiwillig zurücktreten, aber, sagte ich, die Franzosen scheinen von uns seinen Scalp zu verlangen. Aus Ems, fügte ich hinzu, habe ich übrigens Nichts bekommen, als die Erlaubniss am Donnerstag in die Alpen zu gehen.

Der Reichskanzler äusserte im Laufe des freundschaftlichen Gesprächs, es sei unmöglich schärfer und verletzender auf die französischen Expectorationen zu antworten, als wie es die Norddeutsche Zeitung gethan. Seine Excellenz bedauerte dies, konnte aber, als Kenner, eine gewisse Bewunderung jener Replik nicht verheimlichen.

No. 125

GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2288 Vienna, July 11, 1870

Rec. July 13.

Zum belgischen Gesandten soll Graf Beust gesagt haben, Oesterreich werde "une neutralité attentive" beobachten; gegen Lord Bloomfield [1] hat er den dringenden Wunsch ausgesprochen, der Friede möge erhalten werden; vorgestern hat er einen Kurier nach Paris geschickt, heute wieder und gestern den französischen Botschafts-Secretair Baron Bourgoing, der ihm und dem Herzog von Gramont nahe steht, empfangen "pour calmer," wie er sich ausgedruckt haben soll. Lord Bloomfield glaubt, dass es dem Reichskanzler Ernst mit seinen Friedenswünschen sei, in denen er ihn dringend bestärkt hat.

[1] British ambassador at Vienna.

Zu einem andern Diplomaten soll Graf Beust gesagt haben, er wirke dadurch besänftigend in Paris, dass er ihnen die Illusion nehme, sie könnten auf Süd-Deutschland rechnen.

No. 126

GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2289 Vienna, July 11, 1870

Rec. July 13.

Die ungarischen Regierungsorgane schreiben franzosenfreundlich, aber verlangen Frieden für Oesterreich-Ungarn.

Uebereinstimmend in letzterem Sinne lauten die mir bekannt gewordenen Aeusserungen ungarischer Staatsmänner.

Auch ein cisleithanisches Parlament würde, wie heute die Sorge und die Stimmung ist, kaum Geld zu einer Aufstellung bewilligen; wenn man aber eine solche will, so würde man Noten drücken.

No. 127

BISMARCK to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2235 Varzin, July 12, 1870

Sent 8.28 A.M. Rec. 9.25 A.M.

Nach meinem Dafürhalten kann Erbprinz seine Annahme der spanischen Krone bei jetziger Sachlage nur unter der Bedingung anständigerweise aufrechthalten, dass Spanien, Falls Deutschland wegen dieser Sache von Frankreich angegriffen wird, sofort seinerseits Krieg an Frankreich erkläre und beginne. Ich glaube, dass es dem guten Namen des Prinzen und der Sache des Friedens förderlich sein würde, wenn man die Annahme, dass er im obigen Sinne handeln werde oder gehandelt habe, öffentlich verbreitete. Die geeignete Vermittelung hierzu wäre vielleicht mündliche Mittheilung an Bleichröder um den Gedanken etwa in Form eines Telegramms aus Frankfurt a. M. telegraphisch zu verbreiten.[1]

[1] Marginal note of Thile: *Durch entsprechende Rücksprache mit Bleichröder erledigt.*

No. 128

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2233 Ems, July 12, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 9.10 A.M.

Für Kriegsminister von Roon.

Der König wünscht, dass Ew. Excellenz Ihr etwaiges Kommen nach Ems von einer Besprechung mit Grafen Bismarck abhängig machen. . . .

(gez.) v. TRESKOW.
(gez.) ABEKEN.

No. 129

BISMARCK to HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2234 Varzin, July 12, 1870
Sent 9.45 A.M. Rec. 11.05 A.M.

Für Freiherrn von Gerolt.[1]

Obschon Preussen und mehr noch Norddeutschland mit Spanisch-Hohenzollernscher Königs-Wahl nichts zu thun hat, droht Frankreich doch deswegen Krieg gegen Deutschland. Werden wir im Fall des Ausbruchs auch auf wohlwollende Behandlung von Bemühungen maritime Vertheidigungs-Mittel aus Amerika zu bekommen rechnen können? Theilen Sie vertraulich mit und sondiren Sie. Bejahenden Falls soll Herr von Krause mit mündlichen Instructionen für Ew. Hochwohlgeboren dorthin abgehen.

No. 130

COUNT VON SOLMS, Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2246 Paris, July 12, 1870
Sent 12.10 P.M. Rec. 3.35 P.M.

Antwort auf Telegramm No. 24.

Fürst Metternich und Fürstin, Graf Wimpffen und Gräfin, der österreichische General-Consul und österreichisches Botschafts-Personal werden vom Hofe in demonstrativer Weise ausgezeichnet.[2]

[1] Envoy at Washington. [2] Bismarck's marginal comment: *Et après?*

No. 131

P[ro] M[emoria] of THILE.[1]
No. A 2242

Lord Loftus hat mir soeben in indirekter aber nicht missverständlicher Weise angedeutet, dass er sich vielleicht allernächstens zum Fürsten oder zum Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, eventuell zu beiden begeben werde, um ihnen die Resignation des Letzteren auf den spanischen Thron im Namen Englands auf das allerdringendste ans Herz zu legen.

Ich habe dem Botschafter durch absolute Zurückhaltung zu verstehen gegeben, dass derartige Schritte nur in dem Masse Erfolg haben könnte, als das preussische Gouvernement dabei gänzlich unbetheiligt bleibe. Lord Loftus hat diesen stummen Wink sehr wohl verstanden und wird mir, so bald er die gedachte Mission übernimmt, nur kurz anzeigen, dass er eine "Erholungsreise" angetreten habe.

Gerüchtsweise verlautet in hiesigen diplomatischen Kreisen, der Erbprinz sei bereits in Madrid.

No. 132

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2245 Ems, July 12, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 12.40 P.M. Sent 1.50 P.M. Rec. 3.35 P.M.[2]

Das in gestrigem Telegramm No. 22[3] gemeldete Schreiben Seiner Majestät an Fürst von Hohenzollern, dass die Entscheidung ganz allein bei dem Prinzen, war durch zufällig hier anwesenden Oberst Strantz nach Sigmaringen gebracht. Dieser telegraphirt heute Morgen kurz: Erbprinz trete freiwillig[4] zurück; er selbst (Strantz) werde morgen Mittag in Ems zurück sein.

Seine Majestät hat mir zunächst volle Geheimhaltung befoh-

[1] Most of this document has been printed by Rheindorf, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

[2] The deciphered copy bears Bismarck's marginal note: *erhalten bei Ankunft in Berlin.*

[3] See No. 119.

[4] The word *freiwillig* is twice underlined in pencil with an exclamation point in the margin — presumably by Bismarck.

len; wird an Graf Benedetti nur sagen, dass morgen Aeusserung des Fürsten kommen könne, über *Inhalt* aber *Nichts* mittheilen, bis Er Graf Bismarck gesprochen, dessen schleuniges Kommen daher nöthig.

Bitte noch heute Abend nach Graf Bismarck's Ankunft in Berlin um telegraphische Nachricht, ob derselbe von Berlin abreist um morgen Vormittag hier zu sein.

No. 133

GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2258 Vienna, July 12, 1870

Sent 1.55 P.M. Rec. 5.15 A.M., July 13.

Heute sprechen viele Anzeichen dafür, dass Oesterreich nichts thun will.

No. 134

HERR VON PFUEL, Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2256 St. Petersburg, July 12, 1870

Sent 4 P.M. Rec. 9 P.M.

Telegramm No. 14 [1] mitgetheilt. Gegenüber der Anmassung der Forderung Frankreichs hält Herr v. Westmann [2] den Krieg für unvermeidlich wenn nicht Prinz von Hohenzollern unabhängig erklärt auf seine Candidatur zu verzichten, da unter diesen Umständen und bei der voraussichtlich dauernden Feindseligkeit Frankreichs er sich doch nicht auf die Länge auf dem spanischen Thron würde halten können. Preussen bliebe bei dieser Erklärung nach wie vor ausser Spiel. Der Kaiser hat Herrn von Westmann autorisirt, diesen Vorschlag zu machen.

Das russische Gouvernement hatte über französische militairische Vorbereitungen keine Nachrichten, aber über die unsichere Haltung Oesterreichs.[3]

[1] See No. 105.

[2] Locumtenens in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in place of the absent Prince Gorchakov.

[3] Bismarck's marginal comment: *Ist cito erledigt. Ist denn Pr[in]z Reuss nicht mehr in Petersburg?*

No. 135

COUNT RADOLINSKI, Secretary of Legation at Stuttgart, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2261 Stuttgart, July 12, 1870

Sent 4.15 P.M. Rec. 10.20 P.M.

Ich bin heute von Freiherrn von Varnbüler[1] empfangen worden. Seine sämmtlichen Aeusserungen über die ihm von mir gemachten Mittheilungen waren ausweichender und hinausschiebender Art.

No. 136

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2257 London, July 12, 1870

Sent 4.17 P.M. Rec. 9.45 P.M.

Telegramm No. 18 [2] von gestern erhalten.

Duplikat. Lord Granville glaubt nicht, dass schon Truppenbewegungen in Frankreich begonnen haben, sagt mir aber vertraulich, dass Lord Lyons,[3] der sehr energisch auf die dortige Regierung drücke, um sie von extremen Entschlüssen abzuhalten,[4] dies nur von 24 to 24 Stunden zu thun vermöge und dass nach den Berichten der Militair- und Marine- Attachés der englischen Botschaft die französischen Generale und Officiere sehr drängten, weil sie glaubten, diesen Augenblick mehr vorbereitet zu sein, als Preussen. Er giebt daher den freundschaftlichen Rath, dass wenn überhaupt noch etwas unsererseits geschehen sollte und könnte, um den Frieden zu erhalten, es möglichst bald geschehe. Er wünscht nämlich dringend, dass der Erbprinz von Hohenzollern freiwillig zurücktrete, und hat durch alle ihm zu Gebote stehenden Canäle auf ihn einzuwirken gesucht, aber bisher nicht erfahren können, wo der Prinz sich aufhält. Herzog von Gramont hat an Lord Lyons erklärt, dass mit dem Wegfallen dieser Candi-

[1] Württemberg Minister of Foreign Affairs. [2] See No. 105.

[3] British ambassador at Paris.

[4] Bismarck has put an exclamation point opposite this last phrase.

datur Frankreich vollkommen zufrieden gestellt sein werde. Lord Granville erklärt übrigens die nach einem Telegramm gestern Abends vom Herzog von Gramont in der Kammer abgegebene Erklärung, dass alle neutralen Mächte die Legitimität der Sache Frankreichs anerkannt hätten, was England betrifft,[1] für falsch. Er selbst und Herr Gladstone haben gestern in beiden Häusern reservirte, aber im Ganzen nicht unbefriedigende Erklärungen auf Interpellationen abgegeben.

Als ich Lord Granville eben schon verlassen hatte, liess er mich zurückrufen, um mir zu sagen, dass er gerade ein Telegramm erhalte, wonach er hoffe, dass es besser gehe, man habe den Erbprinzen gefunden.

No. 137

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to KING WILLIAM and to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2254 London, July 12, 1870
Sent 4.35 P.M. Rec. at Berlin 8.32 P.M.

Lord Granville schreibt eben, seiner Ueberzeugung nach, sei der Krieg da, wenn man nicht heute eine Antwort von Ems in Paris erhalte.[2]

No. 138

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to KING WILLIAM and to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2253 Paris, July 12, 1870
Sent 4.45 P.M. Rec. at Ems 6.30 P.M.[3] Rec. at Berlin 8.20 P.M.

Während meiner Unterredung mit Herzog von Gramont brachte Olozaga ein officielles Telegramm des Fürsten Anton

[1] Bismarck has underlined this phrase with the marginal comment: *Dasselbe hat mir Fürst Gortschakow und Launay bezüglich Russlands und Italiens gesagt!*

[2] The telegram as deciphered at Ems says *erhalte;* as deciphered at Berlin, *erhält.*

Bismarck has added the marginal comment: *Wie kann er das wissen? Nap-*[*oleon*] *selbst weiss es nicht.*

[3] The Ems copy has the note in King William's handwriting:
Mir pr[äsentirt]: *9 Uhr Ab*[en]*ds.*

Hohenzollern (also des Vaters), der die Verzichtleistung des Sohnes auf die Candidatur meldet.[1]

No. 139

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg.*
No. A 2245 Berlin, July 12, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 5.50 P.M. Sent 6.12 P.M. Rec. 6.27 P.M.[2]

(*In claris.*) Ich fahre heut ab und komme morgen.

(*Ciphered.*) Bitte ehrfurchtsvoll und dringend, vor meiner Ankunft keine Erklärung an Graf Benedetti zu geben.

No. 140

HERR VON KEUDELL to the CROWN PRINCE of Prussia at Potsdam.
Tg. in claris
Berlin, July 12, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 6.45 P.M.

Melde unterthänigst, dass Graf Bismarck heute Abend 10 Uhr 15 nach Ems abreist.

No. 141

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2255 Ems, July 12, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 6.50 P.M. Sent 7.25 P.M. Rec. 8.50 P.M.

Sofort vorzulegen. Fürst Hohenzollern telegraphirt an Seine Majestät 4 Uhr 30 Minuten: "Absagungstelegramm an Prim abgegangen, ebenso Abschrift desselben an Olozaga in Paris. Schreiben mit allen Details überbringt morgen um 10 der rückgehende Offizier."

[1] On the margin in Bismarck's handwriting:

Wolff:

Der spanische Botschafter Olozaga hat heut Mittag dem Herzog von Gramont amtlich mitgetheilt, dass der Prinz von Hohenzollern auf seine Thron-Candidatur verzichte.

(An das Wolffsche Büreau gesandt 12/7 9.10 Abends.)

[2] The deciphered copy bears the note in Abeken's handwriting: *Abends 7 Uhr. Sofort an S. Majestät geschickt. Um 8 Uhr v. Sr. Majestät zurückerhalten.*

Hier wird Geheimniss bewahrt. Se. Majestät wird suchen [1] Sich die Sache von Graf Benedetti zuerst melden zu lassen.

No. 142

BISMARCK to KING WILLIAM. *Tg. Cph.*
No. 318 Ems Berlin, July 12, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 7.20 P.M. Sent 8.08 P.M. Rec. by the King 9.30 P.M.

Herr von Roon und Graf zu Eulenburg [2] eben bei mir; bitten mit mir Eure Majestät ehrfurchtsvoll und dringend, Graf Benedetti gegenüber keine Erklärung irgend welcher Art zu geben, sondern ihm nur zu sagen, der Erbprinz wolle die Entschliessung, die er nach Berathung mit seinem Herrn Vater fassen werde, der spanischen Regierung direkt mittheilen. Dieses müsste denn der Erbprinz wo möglich noch heute telegraphisch thun.[3]

No. 143

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*
No. 320 Ems Berlin, July 12, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 7.20 P.M. Sent 8.17 P.M. Rec. 9.30 P.M.

Ich bitte Seine Majestät den König eben so dringend wie ehrfurchtsvoll, Graf Benedetti gegenüber keinerlei Erklärung geben und keine Vermittlung für eine Erklärung des Erbprinzen übernehmen zu wollen. Der Entschluss des Erbprinzen ist gewiss richtig und hatte ich ihn erwartet, aber er muss ihn nothwendig selbst, ebenso wie seine Annahme-Erklärung, und zwar nach Madrid melden. Jede Erklärung von Seite Seiner Majestät würde den Eindruck einer unter französischer Drohung gemachten Conzession des Königs an sich machen, in Paris als solche ausgebeutet werden, und auf die hier mit Recht gegen

[1] Bismarck has underlined the last two words with a question mark in the margin.

[2] Prussian Minister of the Interior.

[3] On the margin opposite the last half of this telegram the King has put a large question mark, and written: *Darauf ist ja garnichts zu thun, da wir ja morgen aus dem Briefe erst erfahren, ob der Sohn anwesend war; u*[nd] *s*[iehe] *Telegr. No. 317* [No. 138 above]. *W. 12/7. 70.*

Frankreich empfindlich gereizte öffentliche Meinung einen sehr üblen Eindruck machen. — Es ist viel, dass der König, nach Herzog von Gramont's Drohungen, den Grafen Benedetti empfangen hat; aber eine Erklärung Seiner Majestät über des Erbprinzen Rücktritt darf der französische Botschafter, nach meiner ehrfurchtsvollen Ueberzeugung, nach Herzog von Gramont's Drohung nicht nach Paris bringen. Ich glaube eine vollkommen schickliche Form der Rücktritts-Erklärung des Erbprinzen vorschlagen zu können.

No. 144

BISMARCK to the CROWN PRINCE of Prussia at Potsdam.

Tg. in claris

(Kz) No. 1198 Berlin, July 12, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 7.23 P.M.

Melde unterthänigst, dass ich, von der Reise zu angegriffen, heute Abend nicht nach Ems reisen kann. Graf Eulenburg geht für mich.

No. 145

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2245 Berlin, July 12, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 7.37 P.M. Sent 8.06 P.M. (Time of reception not given.)

Im Anschluss an Telegramm No. 25 [1] theile ich mit, dass ich von der heutigen Reise zu angegriffen, heute nicht reisen kann. Graf zu Eulenburg wird für mich reisen und ist vollständig informirt.

No. 146

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2261*a* Paris, July 12, 1870

Sent 7.45 P.M. Rec. "den 13 Juli, früh." [2]

Ein Bericht über Unterredung mit Herzog von Gramont geht heute Abend durch Feldjäger nach Ems.

[1] See No. 139.

[2] This telegram bears the note in Abeken's handwriting: *Sr. M*[ajestät] *13 .7 vor d*[er] *Prom*[ena]*d*[e].

No. 147

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2253 Berlin, July 12, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 9.45 P.M. Sent 10.05 P.M. Rec. 11.25 P.M.[1]

Die Lösung der Sache durch den Rückzug des Erbprinzen macht hier auf die durch die Gramontschen Drohungen verletzte öffentliche Meinung keinen günstigen Eindruck. Man erwartet wenigstens eine genugthuende Erklärung für die Gramontschen Reden und um diesem Gefühl Rechnung zu tragen, schlage ich ehrfurchtsvoll vor, dass Seine Majestät den B^{on} Werther veranlasse auf Urlaub zu gehen. Meiner Auffassung würde es entsprechen, wenn das Motiv nicht verschwiegen würde.

No. 148

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2259 London, July 12, 1870
Sent 10.12 P.M. Rec. 1.35 A.M., July 13. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Die durch Freiherrn von Werther in Paris abgegebenen Erklärungen sind, Lord Lyons zufolge, zu unbestimmt gefunden und haben nicht befriedigt.[2]

No. 149

Draft of a telegram from BISMARCK to COUNT EULENBURG at Ems.
Tg. Cph.
Undated [3]

Die französische Panzerflotte ist in Cherbourg, Brest und Lorient in Ausrüstung begriffen. Kann 4 Tage nach deren Vollen-

[1] The Berlin original of this telegram has the marginal note: *Von des Herrn Chefs Excellenz dictirt.*

The copy deciphered at Ems bears Abeken's note: *S. M. 13/7 vor d*[er] *Prom*-[enade präsentirt].

[2] Bismarck's marginal note: *Werther kann doch über den Rücktritt des Prinzen keine Erklärungen abgegeben haben?*

[3] This telegram was never sent, as it bears on the margin the note: *Soll cessieren auf Befehl des Herrn Chefs Excellenz.* In the archives it is bound with the documents of July 12.

dung in der Nordsee erscheinen. Ich habe nicht das Recht die nöthigen Defensivmassregeln ohne S. M. anzuordnen; wenn Se. Majestät nicht zurückkehre, so geht die Situation über meine Kraft und meine Verantwortlichkeit.

No. 150

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to KING WILLIAM. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2333 Paris, July 12, 1870

Rec. at Ems, July 13, in the afternoon, and sent on to Berlin that evening.[1]

Heute Vormittag um 10 Uhr eingetroffen, in Gesellschaft eines französischen Couriers des Grafen Benedetti, des Attaché Baron Bourqueney, hat der Herzog von Gramont sehr bald seinen Cabinetschef Grafen Faverney zu mir geschickt, um mich fragen zu lassen, ob ich im Stande wäre, dem Minister heute meinen Besuch zu machen. Ich habe mich gleich dazu bereit erklärt und wurde vom Herzog von Gramont in der gewohnten freundlichen Weise, wie es zwischen alten Bekannten üblich, empfangen. Ehe ich über unsere Unterredung berichte, möchte ich bemerken, dass dieselbe durch Anmeldung des spanischen Botschafters, der eine officielle Mittheilung zu machen habe, unterbrochen wurde.

Diese Mittheilung bestand in einem Telegramm des Prinzen Anton von Hohenzollern (Vater), worin derselbe anzeigte, dass sein Sohn der Erbprinz bei der Verwickelung, die seine Throncandidatur hervorrufe, dem spanischen Thron entsage und an den Marschall Prim diese Nachricht direkt habe gelangen lassen.

Unsere vom Herzog von Gramont eingeleitete Unterredung rollte hauptsächlich auf dem von Grafen Benedetti angeregten

[1] As to the time of its reception, the original despatch simply bears the inscriptions: *pr* [äsentat]. *Ems d. 13 Juli Nachmittags. V. Ems weitergeschickt am 13 Abds.* See also Nos. 176 and 177.

This report, with some omissions, was communicated by Bismarck by circular despatch of July 18 to all the European powers and to the United States. On July 20 it was also laid before the North German Reichstag as one of the documents explaining the origin of the war, and it is printed in the *Stenographische Berichte des Reichstags, Ausserordentliche Session, 1870*, p. 10. Also in *Staatsarchiv*, xix (1870), No. 3022.

Gegenstand, dass Euere Königliche Majestät *durch* die für die Hohenzollernsche Throncandidatur gegebene Autorisation, ohne Sich vorher darüber in irgend einer Weise mit der Kaiserlich Französischen Regierung ins Benehmen zu setzen, Sich nicht bewusst wären, dadurch Frankreich verletzt zu haben.

Er fragte mich, ob sich dieses wirklich so verhalte. Ich entwickelte ihm darauf, dass Euere Königliche Majestät diese Autorisation formell nicht hätten versagen können, nachdem der Prinz von Hohenzollern zur Annahme der ihm angebotenen Krone einen Beruf gefühlt habe, und haben Allerhöchstdieselben bei den verwandtschaftlichen Verhältnissen des Prinzen zum Kaiser gar nicht glauben können, dass diese Thron-Candidatur in Frankreich übel aufgenommen werden würde. Der Herzog von Gramont citirte darauf die Beispiele des Herzogs von Nemours für den belgischen Thron und des Prinzen Alfred für den griechischen Thron als Fälle, wo eine solche Autorisation versagt worden wäre. Ich bestritt die Analogie mit dem gegenwärtigen Fall.

Der Herzog von Gramont führte alsdann an, es liege doch nahe, dass Frankreich als der nächste Nachbar Spaniens über die Thronbesetzung letzteren Landes ein reges Interesse haben müsse. Das Geheimniss, welches über die Hohenzollernschen Verhandlungen bewahrt, hätte hier nur sehr verletzen können, und dies um so mehr, als der Kaiserliche Hof in allen politischen Fragen stets die grössten Rücksichten für unsere Regierung bewiesen habe.[1] Dies Verfahren habe in ganz Frankreich tief verletzt und finde den Ausdruck in der Stimmung der Kammer, die zur Erschwerung der Frage leider gegenwärtig vereinigt wäre.

Der Herzog von Gramont fügte hinzu, er sehe die Entsagung des Prinzen von Hohenzollern auf den spanischen Thron als Nebensache an, denn die französische Regierung hätte doch niemals seine Thronbesteigung zugelassen, aber er fürchte, dass aus unserem Verfahren eine bleibende Verstimmung zwischen

Foot-notes 1 to 7 in this and the two following pages indicate Bismarck's marginal annotations.

1 !

unseren beiden Ländern fortdauern würde. Der Keim dazu müsse vertilgt werden, und er ginge dabei von dem Gesichtspunkt aus, dass wir in unserem Verfahren gegen Frankreich kein freundliches Procédé beobachtet, wie dies auch seines Wissens von allen Grossmächten anerkannt würde. Er möchte, aufrichtig gesagt, keinen Krieg, sondern freundliche und gute Beziehungen mit Preussen, und von mir wisse er, dass ich nach demselben Ziele trachte; wir müssten daher zusammen überlegen, ob es ein Mittel gebe, hierin eine befriedigende Einwirkung auszuüben, und stelle meiner Erwägung anheim, ob dazu nicht ein Brief des Königs an den Kaiser der richtige Ausweg wäre.[2] Er appellire dabei an das ritterliche Herz Euerer Königlichen Majestät, welches dabei gewiss die richtige Eingebung verleihen würde.

Es könnte darin nur gesagt werden, dass Euere Königliche Majestät, indem AllerhöchstSie dem Prinzen Leopold von Hohenzollern zur Annahme der Krone Spaniens ermächtigt hätten, nicht hätten glauben können, weder den Interessen noch der Würde der französischen Nation zu nahe zu treten; der König schlösse Sich der Entsagung des Prinzen von Hohenzollern an, und zwar mit dem Wunsch und der Hoffnung, dass jeder Grund des Zwiespalts zwischen unseren beiden Regierungen nunmehr verschwunden sein würde. Solche und ähnliche Worte, die im Allgemeinen durch Publicität zur Beschwichtigung der allgemeinen Volksstimmung beitragen könnten, dürfte dieser Brief enthalten; doch möchte er bevorworten, dass von den verwandtschaftlichen Beziehungen zum Kaiser nicht die Rede sei.[3] Dieses Argument verletze hier eigenthümlicher Weise.

Ich habe dem Herzog von Gramont bemerkt, dass ein solcher Schritt ungemein durch seine am 6. d. M. in der Deputirten-Kammer gegebene Erklärung erschwert würde;[4] es kämen da Andeutungen vor, die Eure Königliche Majestät hätten tief beleidigen müssen.[5] Er wollte das bestreiten, hob hervor, dass Preussen gar nicht genannt, und seine Rede zur Beruhigung der

[2] !! [3] ! [4] *wirklich?!!*
[5] *dann doch?*

aufgeregten Kammer damals dringend nothwendig gewesen wäre. Unterdessen kam der Justiz-Minister Herr Ollivier zu unserer Unterredung, über die ihn der Herzog von Gramont in Kenntniss setzte. Herr Ollivier hob dringend die heilsame und im Interesse des Friedens nothwendige Wirkung hervor und bat mich inständigst, den Gedanken eines solchen Briefes Eurer Königlichen Majestät gegenüber auszusprechen. Beide sagten, dass wenn ich es nicht glaubte übernehmen zu können, so würden sie sich genöthigt sehen, mit der Anregung dieser Frage den Grafen Benedetti zu beauftragen.[6] Unter diesen Umständen hielt ich es für das Beste zu rathen, den Grafen Benedetti davon auszuschliessen und es mir zu überlassen, darüber unterthänigst zu berichten.* Indem die beiden Minister hervorhoben, dass sie einen solchen Ausgleich zur Beruhigung der aufgeregten Gemüther für ihre ministerielle Stellung bedürften,[7] fügten sie hinzu, dass ein solcher Brief sie berechtigen würde, bei nicht ausbleibenden Angriffen gegen Euere Königliche Majestät als Vertheidiger aufzutreten. Beide bemerkten mir schliesslich, sie könnten mir nicht verhehlen, dass unser Verfahren in der Hohenzollern-Spanischen Angelegenheit viel mehr die französische Nation aufgeregt als den Kaiser beschäftigt habe.

In unserem Gespräch liess der Herzog von Gramont die Bemerkung fallen, wie er glaube, dass der Prinz von Hohenzollern auf Euerer Königlichen Majestät Veranlassung entsagt habe, doch bestritt ich das und bezeichnete die Renunciation als gewiss auf eigener Initiative des Hohenzollernschen Prinzen beruhend.

Eurer Königlichen Majestät werden nun in Hochdero Weisheit entscheiden, was darin zu thun ist, doch so schwer es mir auch wurde, habe ich nicht geglaubt, mich der Erwähnung der obenstehenden Umstände entziehen zu dürfen.*

Bei dem eiligen Drängen der beiden Minister wünschten sie, dass ich die Sache telegraphisch anregen sollte, doch dazu fand ich keine Veranlassung.

[6] *wäre in der Ordnung gewesen.* [7] !!

* These sentences were omitted in the published text of this report.

No. 151

HERR VON EICHMANN, Envoy at Dresden, to BISMARCK.
No. A 2271 Dresden, July 12, 1870
Rec. July 13, 1870.

Eurer Excellenz hohes Telegramm [1] en clair von gestern Abend, die spanische Thronfolge betreffend, habe ich zu erhalten die Ehre gehabt. Als ich heute den Minister von Nostitz aufsuchte, um mich, bemerkend, dass ich zu einer officiellen Mittheilung nicht beauftragt sei, im Sinne dieses Telegramms gegen ihn zu äussern, sagte er mir, dass ihn der französische Gesandte auf Grund eines gestern Abend im Dresdener Journal abgedruckten Resümé's bereits gefragt habe, ob ihm eine solche Depesche mitgetheilt worden sei. Der Minister hatte geantwortet, dass ihm eine Depesche zwar nicht mitgetheilt sei, dass ich mich aber in ähnlichem Sinne geäussert hätte. Marquis de Chateaurenard hat darauf bemerkt, dass wenn Preussen in Paris die Erklärung abgeben könnte, dass Seine Majestät der König dem Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern nicht Allerhöchstseine Genehmigung zur Annahme der Seiner Hoheit angetragenen spanischen Throncandidatur ertheilt habe, Alles beendigt sein würde. Frankreich stehe unter dem Eindruck, dass die Berufung des Erbprinzen die Folge einer ihm verheimlichten, von Preussen aber gekannten und gebilligten Verhandlung sei, denn man hätte nicht anders als annehmen können, dass der Prinz nur mit Genehmigung Seiner Majestät des Königs einen so verhängnissvollen Schritt gethan. Dass dieser Schritt ein verhängnissvoller, Frankreich unangenehmer sei, habe man in Madrid durch ausdrückliche Erklärungen des französischen Botschafters schon seit langer Zeit gewusst [2] und Marquis de Chateaurenard zweifle nicht, dass Graf Benedetti auch das Berliner Cabinet davon unterrichtet haben werde.[2] Ebendarum lege man in Paris einen so hohen Werth darauf, von Preussen die bestimmte Erklärung zu erhalten, dass Seine Majestät der König jene Genehmigung nicht ertheilt habe. Herr von Nostitz hatte darauf, wie er mir sagte, erwiedert, dass er

[1] See No. 89. [2] Opposite this phrase Bismarck has written: *Nein.*

nicht wisse, ob man Preussischer Seits eine solche Erklärung geben wolle oder könne, dass ihm nur bekannt sei, wie die Königliche Regierung sich bisher weder *fördernd* noch hindernd in die Sache gemischt habe, und dass jedenfalls die Sprache des Herzogs von Gramont nicht danach angethan sei, Preussen den Wünschen Frankreichs geneigt zu machen. Der Passus in Eurer Excellenz Telegramm, nach welchem "die Königliche Regierung sich jeder Einwirkung auf die Königswahl, sowie auf eventuelle Annahme oder Ablehnung der Krone durch einen der zu wählenden Candidaten bisher enthalten hat," schien Herrn von Nostitz wesentlich zu beruhigen, indessen war es ihm doch leicht anzumerken, dass er den Behauptungen des französischen Gesandten gegenüber Werth darauf legt, über den gehorsamst erwähnten speciellen Punkt mit einer Aufklärung versehen zu werden.

No. 152

GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2296 Vienna, July 12, 1870

Rec. July 13.

Der Kaiserlich Russische Geschäftsträger, der mir persönlich befreundet ist, hat eine Unterredung mit Baron Orczy gehabt, dem ungarischen Beamten des auswärtigen Ministeriums: in klarer, überzeugungsvoller und Vertrauen erweckender Induktion hat Herr von Orczy dargelegt, dass Ungarn jede kriegerische Action Oesterreichs, deren Zweck die Wiedergewinnung der Stellung in Deutschland wäre, hindern müsse.

Auf die alten Beziehungen des Grafen Andrassy zu Frankreich, dem er Dank schuldet, anspielend, erhielt der russische Geschäftsträger die Antwort: ces relations n'ont jamais atteint le degré d'intimité qui existe entre la Prusse et la Russie.

Dann fragte Herr von Orczy, ob es denn wohl unter allen Nationalitäten Oesterreich-Ungarns eine geben könnte, die sich über diesen Krieg freuen würde?

Les Polonnais [*sic*], antwortete Herr von Wassiltschikow, und dies gab der Magyar zu.

No. 153

GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2297 Vienna, July 12, 1870

Rec. July 13.

(Vertraulich.) Obwohl ich vorgestern Abend mit Graf Potocki und Baron Orczy zusammen war, sprach ich nicht über Politik mit ihnen. Heute übermittelt mir eine zuverlässige Person folgende Aeusserungen des Erstgenannten:

Oesterreich wird Nichts thun, aber Preussen soll keine kategorische Erklärung von uns verlangen; man soll uns nicht behandeln, wie man Sachsen 1866 behandelt hat.

No. 154

COUNT VON FLEMMING, Envoy at Karlsruhe, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2318 Baden-Baden, July 12, 1870

Rec. July 14.

Eurer Excellenz telegraphische Depeschen No. 2 bis 5 [1] sind mir zugekommen. Nachdem ich, wie bereits gehorsamst gemeldet, Gelegenheit gefunden Seiner Königlichen Hoheit dem Grossherzog von dem Inhalt der No. 2 und 3 Kenntniss zu geben, habe ich auch dem Präsidenten von Freydorf [2] die vorgeschriebenen Mittheilungen gemacht, und mich ihm gegenüber zugleich in Sinne des in vergangener Nacht eingetroffenen Telegramms No. 5 geäussert. — Der Herr Präsident bemerkte mir, dass er es sich angelegen sein lassen werde, etwaigen Zweifeln über die Stellung Badens bei einem Angriff Frankreichs auf Deutschland zu begegnen. Er habe bereits einigen der hiesigen Diplomaten gesagt, dass ein solcher Angriff unter allen Umständen den casus foederis begründe, und er würde dies auch dem französischen Gesandten erklären, sobald letzterer über die Sache mit ihm sprechen würde. Ebenso wolle er den Grossherzoglichen Gesand-

[1] See Nos. 102, 103, 105. [2] Prime Minister of Baden.

ten in Paris über die Sprache die er bezüglich der Haltung Badens zu führen habe, mit Instruktion versehen. . . .

Dass ein französischer Angriff auf Deutschland dessen Regierungen zur Abwehr geeinigt und *gerüstet* finden werde, ist mir, was das "Gerüstet-Sein" betrifft, nicht so zweifellos, als es die telegraphische Depesche Euerer Excellenz vorauszusetzen scheint. — Auch hier lauten die von Frankreich kommenden Nachrichten dahin, dass die französische Regierung den Kriege auf's Rascheste mit den im Lager von Chalons, in Paris, Lyon, etc. etc., befindlichen unmobilisirten Truppen beginnen werde.

No. 155

BARON VON WERTHERN, Envoy at Munich, to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)

No. A 2339 Munich, July 12, 1870

Rec. July 14.

Die gestern Mittag eingegangenen Telegramme No. 11 und 12 [1] haben mir Veranlassung gegeben mich mit dem Grafen Bray ganz ausführlich über die Situation auszusprechen. Ich recapitulirte was schon zum Ueberfluss gesagt worden ist, wies ihn darauf hin, dass die insolente Sprache Frankreichs zum grossen Theil mit durch die unverzeihliche Sorglosigkeit verursacht zu sein schien, mit welcher die Bayrische Regierung der Verbreitung des Glaubens an ihrem Abfall von unserem Bündniss im Falle eines Krieges mit Frankreich Vorschub geleistet habe, erinnerte ihn wie die Ueberzeugung aller weiter blickenden Menschen, dass die Selbständigkeit Bayern's schon bei jeder Zögerung Gefahr läuft, und schloss indem ich ihm sagte, meiner Ansicht nach gebe es nur einen Weg für ihn und der sei, im Momente einer Kriegserklärung Frankreichs an uns den Marquis Cadore seine Pässe zu schicken und *dies jetzt gleich in Paris anzukündigen.*

Der Graf Bray ist zu klug um nicht zu fühlen, dass ich Recht hatte, aber auch viel zu schwach um nach irgend einer Richtung hin etwas Entschiedenes zu unternehmen. Doch versicherte er mich, wie telegraphisch gemeldet,[2] er habe dem französischen

[1] See No. 103. [2] See No. 115.

Gesandten schon gestern gesagt: im Falle eines Angriffs werde Frankreich Deutschland einig, Bayern seines Bündnisses mit uns eingedenk finden.

Heute Vormittag besuchte mich der Graf um mir die (in meinem Telegramm No. 17 bereits zu Euerer Excellenz Kenntniss gebrachte) Nachricht des Grafen Tauffkirchen aus Florenz mitzutheilen, nach welcher in dortigen ministeriellen Kreisen der Abschluss eines Bündnisses mit Frankreich und Aufstellung von 80,000 Mann — gegen Concessionen in Rom — als wahrscheinlich besprochen wurde.

Diese Nachricht schien ihm offenbar grosse Sorge zu machen und es lässt sich nicht läugnen, dass die Constellation, die sich daraus für Bayern ergibt, in Verbindung mit einer österreichischen Demonstration auf der langen Grenze von Eger bis Bregenz und der ultramontanen, uns feindlichen Strömung im Lande auf den ersten Anblick allerdings etwas Beunruhigendes hat. Dessenungeachtet wiederholte er mir seine gestrigen Versicherungen und bemerkte dabei, dass wenn es gelänge die schwebende Frage jedes dynastischen Interesses zu entkleiden und den Nachweis zu führen, dass Frankreich uns unmotivirt provocire, er trotz der zu erwartenden heftigen Opposition in den Kammern nicht davon zweifle, das Bündniss mit uns aufrecht zu erhalten. "Aber wir müssten ihm dies auch leicht machen."

Mir scheint, es wird darauf ankommen, wie die öffentliche Meinung die Frage auffasst: darnach wird sich die bayerische Regierung je nach der einen oder andern Seite hin schieben lassen.

Gestern Abend hatte Se. K. H. der Grossherzog von Weimar, auf dem Rückwege von Oberammergau, die Gnade bei mir zu speisen. Ueber die Situation unterrichtet, fragte er mich, ob Er nicht etwas beitragen könne um auf Se. M. den König einzuwirken. Ich möchte dies als einen Versuch nicht in Abrede stellen und in Folge dessen schrieb seine Königliche Hoheit dem König einen sehr hübschen und eindringlichen Brief, in welchem Er Allerhöchstdieselben in dieser ernsten Lage an seinen deutschen Beruf erinnerte und die Erwartung aussprach, er werde demselben unter allen Umständen treu bleiben. Der Auftrag diesen Brief zu befördern gab mir Veranlassung, in einem (osten-

sibeln) Brief an den Major von Sauer unsere Stellung und das Verhalten Seiner Majestät zu präcisiren.

Sehr wünschenswerth wäre es auch wenn der Fürst Hohenlohe zurückkäme, dann wenn er auch bei seiner letzten Anwesenheit den König gar nicht gesehen hat — in Berlin hat man das Gegentheil behauptet — so böte doch die heutige Lage vielleicht eher eine Veranlassung zu einer Besprechung. Ich habe daher den Fürsten, der noch in Aussen ist, durch eine dritte Person, die meine Ansicht theilt, aufgefordert ohne allen Zeitverlust sich nach München zu begeben und zwar bis übermorgen, da an diesem Tage Seine Majestät der Aufführung des Rheingoldes beiwohnen will.

Die Stimmung unter den Bayern ist im Ganzen recht gut und uns günstig; noch besser aber unter den jüngeren Offizieren der Armee, deren Unzufriedenheit mit der laxen Behandlung des Militairbudgets Seitens der Regierung wächst.

Dass auf der anderen Seite der Hass der Ultramontanen gegen uns um so rückhaltloser hervorbricht, bedarf kaum der Erwähnung. Selbst die nach hiesigen Begriffen anständige Postzeitung leistet das Aergste in Verdächtigungen; die anderen predigen offen den Abfall von uns. Ich beehre mich einige Blätter beizufügen. Trotzdem wäre es in diesem Augenblicke leicht einen ganz erträglichen Zustand herzustellen. Es bedürfte dazu nur eines Mannes mit dem gewöhnlichen Grade von Energie, der sich auf die Armee und die Intelligenz der Städte stützte. Aber ich sehe nicht Einen, der hierzu den Muth hat.

No. 156

BISMARCK to the North German (Prussian) Representatives at London, Vienna, St. Petersburg, Munich, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Dresden, Florence, and Madrid. *Tg.*

No. A 2253 Berlin, July 13, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 5.30 A.M.

B[n] Werther telegraphirt[1] dass der spanische Botschafter in Paris dem Duc de Gramont amtlich angezeigt, dass der Erbprinz von Hohenzollern auf seine Candidatur verzichte.

[1] See No. 138.

No. 157

BISMARCK to the Prussian (North German) Representatives at Dresden, Munich, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, and Madrid. *Tg. in claris*
No. A 2253 Berlin, July 13, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 5.30 A.M.

Nach Telegramm Bernstorffs[1] hat die englische Regierung ihren Einfluss auf die Hohenzollernschen Fürsten angewandt, um den Prinzen zum Verzicht zu bestimmen.

No. 158

BISMARCK to HERR VON EICHMANN, Envoy at Dresden.
No. A 2271 Berlin, July 13, 1870

Eurer Hochwohlgeboren politischen Bericht No. 40[2] vom gestrigen Tage habe ich zu erhalten die Ehre gehabt.

Die darin enthaltenen Mittheilungen über eine Besprechung zwischen dem Herrn Minister von Nostitz und dem Marquis de Château-Renard in Betreff der spanischen Thronangelegenheit geben mir zu nachstehenden ergebensten Bemerkungen Veranlassung.

Das Auswärtige Amt des Norddeutschen Bundes soll, nach meiner Auffassung, vor der Königlichen Sächsischen Regierung principiell keine Geheimnisse haben; wenigsten keine weiteren Geheimnisse, als etwa solche, die ein Minister der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten auch vor seinen Collegen vorübergehend zu wahren pflegt. Mit diesem Stand verträgt es sich aber nicht, wenn ein fremder Gesandter — wie Beispielsweise, nach Eurer Hochwohlgeboren gefälliger Mittheilung, der Marquis de Château-Renard—sich Interpellationen über Geschäfte erlauben darf, die zwischen dem gemeinsamen Auswärtigen Amte des Bundes und der Königlichen Sächsischen Regierung verhandelt werden. Dem genannten französischen Diplomaten gegenüber erscheint Vorsicht um so mehr geboten, als seine Angaben sich gerade in dem vorliegenden Falle als ganz unzuverlässig und unwahr herausgestellt haben. Dass man in Madrid durch

[1] See No. 136. [2] See No. 151.

ausdrückliche Erklärung des französischen Botschafters schon seit langer Zeit gewusst hätte, die Thron-Candidatur des Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern sei verhängnissvoll und Frankreich unangenehm, kann schon um deswillen nicht richtig sein, weil nach unsern zuverlässigen Informationen — der Marschall Prim so wenig an französischer Seits zu gewärtigende Schwierigkeiten geglaubt hat, dass er seinen beabsichtigten Aufenthalt in Vichy dazu benutzen wollte, die Sache mit dem Kaiser Napoleon und den französischen Staatsmännern zu ordnen. Was nun vollends Graf Benedetti anbelangt, so ist zwischen ihm und mir die fragliche Angelegenheit *niemals* zur Sprache gekommen. Es hat dies auch um so weniger geschehen können, als überhaupt für das Auswärtige Amt die Hohenzollernsche Thron-Candidatur eine unbekannte Sache war und die wenigen am Königlichen *Hofe* verkehrenden Personen, die gleich mir privatim Kenntniss erhielten, das Geheimniss als ein Fremdes zu wahren hatten. Nicht einmal mit dem hiesigen spanischen Gesandten ist, bis zum Eintritt der gegenwärtigen Verwickelung, irgend ein Wort über die Angelegenheit gewechselt worden.

Nach Vorstehendem wird es gerechtfertigt erscheinen, wenn wir uns erlauben dem Herrn Staats-Minister von Nostitz Vorsicht in Bezug auf die Mittheilungen des dortigen französischen Gesandten zu empfehlen.

Die nächste Zeit wird uns übrigens wohl darüber aufklären, ob, ungeachtet der Verzichtleistung des Erbprinzen, französischer Seits noch feindliche Absichten gegen uns gehegt werden. Erhalten wir darüber nicht in wenigen Tagen volle Beruhigung, so werden wir Seiner Majestät dem Könige rathen, den Reichstag des Norddeutschen Bundes für die nächste Woche einzuberufen.

Euer Hochwohlgeboren ersuche ich ergebenst, Sich im Sinne der vorstehenden Bemerkungen vertraulich gegen den stellvertretenden Königlich Sächsischen Herrn Minister der Auswärtigen Angelegenheiten äussern zu wollen.

No. 159

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2282 Ems, July 13, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 10.15 A.M. Sent 10.50 A.M. Rec. 12.25 P.M.

Sofort. Telegramme bis incl. 28 [1] erhalten.

Seine Majestät wird Herrn Benedetti nicht sehen vor Graf Eulenburgs Ankunft. Herr Benedetti bittet Audienz vor Sitzung des gesetzgebenden Körpers, um von Seiner Majestät dem Könige selbst eine Erklärung oder Mittheilung zu erhalten, die dort zu verwerthen. Wird natürlich keine erhalten. Seine Majestät beabsichtigt, ihm zu sagen, der Fürst theile ihm, dem Könige, mit, dass in Madrid und Paris Erklärungen abgegeben seien; dort sei man also von den Entschlüssen des Erbprinzen vor Seiner Majestät unterrichtet, und Graf Benedetti werde sie von Paris aus erfahren; Er Selbst der König habe ihm nichts weiter zu sagen.

Mit Beurlaubung des Freiherrn von Werthern unter Angabe des Motives ist Seine Majestät einverstanden, will nur angekündigten Bericht von ihm erwarten.

No. 160

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2286 Paris, July 13, 1870
(Time of sending and reception not given.)

Die heutige Constitutionnel enthält friedliche Artikel in Betreff der Thron-Entsagung des Prinzen von Hohenzollern. Lord Lyons möchte darin vorläufige Ansicht der Regierung erblicken. Ohne diese Entsagung wäre heute Kriegs-Erklärung zu erwarten gewesen. (Eben Minister-Rath in St. Cloud, wohin Lord Lyons Telegramm von Lord Granville geschickt, welcher letztere sich dahin ausspricht, dass nach obiger Thron-Entsagung aller Grund zum Kriege für Frankreich wegfalle.) Entscheidend wichtig

[1] The last telegram referred to is No. 147 above.

wird in heutiger Sitzung ministerielle Erklärung über Hohenzollernsche Thron-Entsagung sein.

Duplikat nach Ems, nicht nach Varzin, in der Voraussetzung, dass Graf Bismarck abgereist.[1]

No. 161

COUNT RADOLINSKI, Chargé d'Affaires at Stuttgart, to BISMARCK.

Tg. in claris

No. A 2285 Stuttgart, July 13, 1870

Sent 2.08 P.M. Rec. at Berlin 3.25 P.M.

Minister von Varnbüler hat mich eben rufen lassen und mir gesagt, dass die letzten Grammontschen Forderungen trotz des Hohenzollernschen Verzichtes das nationale Gefühl in Württemberg tief verletzen und gegen Frankreich aufregen müssen. Er hat französischen Gesandten ermächtigt, dies nach Paris zu schreiben und hat an Graf Bray geschrieben, um im gleichen Sinne auf Graf Cadore zu wirken.[2]

No. 162

BISMARCK to BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris. *Tg. Cph.*

(Kt) No. 25 Berlin, July 13, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 2.25 P.M.[3]

Wir hatten gehofft, dass der Herzog v. Gramont nach Ew. Excellenz Rückkehr zunächst beruhigende Erklärungen über seine drohenden Aeusserungen geben werde. Ew. Excellenz melden hiervon nichts. Sie können natürlich eine Initiative in dieser Richtung ohne speciellen Auftrag des Königs nicht ergreifen; zur Abmessung Ihrer Haltung theile ich Ew. Excellenz aber mit, dass wenn wir nicht in diesen Tagen völlig beruhigende Auslassungen über die Intentionen Frankreichs erhalten, ich Sr.

[1] The portion of this despatch which appears in parentheses was, by Bismarck's orders, telegraphed to the Prussian envoys at Dresden, Munich, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, and Darmstadt at 2.30 A.M., July 14.

[2] Bismarck transmitted this report to King William that same afternoon by a telegram which was sent to the telegraph station at 5.50 and received at Ems 7.04 P.M.

[3] "Vom H. Chef Excellenz dictirt."

Majestät vorschlagen werde, den Norddeutschen Reichstag für Anfang nächster Woche zu berufen, um mit ihm unsere Haltung zu berathen.

No. 163

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2301 Ems, July 13, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 3.10 P.M. Sent 3.50 P.M. Rec. 6.09 P.M.[1]

S. M. der König schreibt mir:[2]

"Graf Benedetti fing mich auf der Promenade ab, um auf zuletzt sehr zudringliche Art von mir zu verlangen, ich sollte ihn autorisiren, sofort zu telegraphiren, dass ich für alle Zukunft mich verpflichtete, niemals wieder meine Zustimmung zu geben, wenn die Hohenzollern auf ihre Candidatur zurückkämen. Ich wies ihn zuletzt etwas ernst zurück, da man à tout jamais dergleichen Engagements nicht nehmen dürfe noch könne. Natürlich sagte ich ihm, dass ich noch nichts erhalten hätte, und da er über Paris und Madrid früher benachrichtigt sei als ich, er wohl einsähe, dass mein Gouvernement wiederum ausser Spiel sei."

Se. Majestät hat seitdem ein Schreiben des Fürsten bekommen.[3] Da Se. Majestät dem Grafen Benedetti gesagt, dass er Nachricht vom Fürsten erwarte, hat Allerhöchstderselbe, mit Rücksicht auf die obige Zumuthung[4] auf des Grafen Eulenburg und meinen

[1] This famous document, the original 'Ems Telegram,' was first given to the world by Count Caprivi in his Reichstag speech of Nov. 23, 1892 (see *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Reichstags. Session 1892–93.* I. Bd., pp. 9, 10), and has since been republished in many places. My chief reason for reprinting it here is to give the variants which appear in Abeken's autograph text of the despatch, that is, the words or passages originally set down but subsequently suppressed or amended — variants which are of much interest for an understanding both of the events of July 13 at Ems and of the genesis of this momentous telegram.

[2] The despatch originally began: *Graf Eulenburg angekommen. Unmittelbar vor seiner Ankunft schrieb mir S. M. der König*, etc. Another cancelled version of the first sentence of the telegram was: *S. M. der König schreibt mir eben*, etc.

[3] The following phrase, *welches die Nachricht von der Entsagung bestätigt*, has been crossed out.

[4] This phrase (*mit Rücksicht . . . Zumuthung*) was added in the margin, apparently as an afterthought.

Vortrag, beschlossen, den Grafen Benedetti nicht mehr zu empfangen, sondern ihm nur[1] durch einen Adjutanten sagen zu lassen: dass Se. Majestät jetzt vom Fürsten die Bestätigung der Nachricht erhalten, die Benedetti aus Paris schon gehabt, und dem Bothschafter nichts weiter zu sagen habe.[2]

Se. Majestät stellt Eurer Excellenz anheim, ob nicht die neue Forderung Benedettis und ihre Zuruckweisung[3] sowohl unseren Gesandten als in der Presse mitgetheilt werden sollte.

No. 164

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2291 Paris, July 13, 1870

Sent 4 P.M. Rec. 7.35 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Waldersee meldet: Flotten-Ausrüstung, Eisenbahn-Vorbereitungen und Verpflegungs-Massregeln werden in umfangreichster Weise fortbetrieben. Die Erklärung des Herzogs von Gramont wird in militairischen Kreisen als kriegerisch gedeutet.[4]

No. 165

GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2294 Vienna, July 13, 1870

Sent 4.10 P.M. Rec. 6.10 P.M.

Graf Beust sagt mir: "Ich habe mit Kaiser und Erzherzog Albrecht gesprochen, sie wünschen den Krieg nicht, nach Frankreich habe ich geschrieben, es irre, wenn es auf die süddeutsche Staaten rechne."

[1] The original form of this passage was simply: *beschlossen, dem Grafen Benedetti durch einen Adjutanten sagen zu lassen*, etc.

[2] Originally this passage ended with the still more drastic words: *und seiner Abreise nach Paris nichts mehr im Wege stehe.*

[3] The word originally used here was the milder term, *Ablehnung.*

[4] At 10.30 P.M. that evening Bismarck forwarded this telegram to the North German representatives at London, St. Petersburg, and Vienna.

No. 166

BISMARCK to BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris. *Tg. Cph.* (Kt) No. 26 Berlin, July 13, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 4.10 P.M.

D'après un télégramme de Mr. Okouneff au Prince Gortchacow qui est ici, le Duc de Gramont vous aurait dit que l'affaire n'était point vidée par la renonciation du Prince Leopold puisqu'il restait toujours le *mauvais procédé*. Si cette nouvelle était exacte elle devrait influencer essentiellement nos décisions. Veuillez me dire ce qui en est.

No. 167

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN.

(Kz) No. 1207 Berlin, July 13, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 4.10 P.M.[1]

FÜR GRAF EULENBURG.

Nach einem bei der russischen Gesandtschaft eingegangenen Telegramm Okuniews hat Gramont nach erhaltener amtlicher Mittheilung von des Erbprinzen Rücktritt an Werther gesagt, die Sache sei damit nicht erledigt, il restait le mauvais procédé. Von Werther noch keine Meldung. Falls die Nachricht sich bestätigt, so würde meines Erachtens die Rückkehr des Königs hierher, zu der Seine Majestät schon vor 3 Tagen Sich bereit erklärte, und die Berufung des Reichstages nicht länger zu verschieben sein.

No. 168

HERR VON THILE, Secretary of State, to the CROWN PRINCE of Prussia. P[ro] M[emoria] [2]

No. A 2375 Berlin, July 13, 1870

Ein Telegramm des russischen Geschäftsträgers Okuneff in Paris, dessen Inhalt Fürst Gortschakoff mir durch Herrn von Oubril im Wesentlichen hat wiedergeben lassen, meldet:

[1] Bismarck's autograph draft.

[2] This memorandum has the further heading: *Anlage Seiner Königlichen Hoheit dem Kronprinzen zu gnädigster Kenntnissnahme auf Bestimmung des Minister-Präsidenten unterthänigst vorgelegt.*

Der Herzog von Gramont habe nach Empfang der Nachricht von dem Verzicht des Erbprinzen an Baron Werther geäussert, "que l'affaire par là n'était pas encore vidée puisqu'il restait toujours *le mauvais procédé.*"

Da Baron Werther nichts hiervon meldet, ist er um schleunige Auskunft ersucht worden.

Mittheilung des Vorstehenden geht gleichzeitig an Graf Eulenburg nach Ems mit dem Bemerken des Minister-Präsidenten, dass im Bestätigungsfalle derselbe für Rückkehr Seiner Majestät nach Berlin und schleunige Berufung des Reichstags stimmen würde.

No. 169

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2306 Paris, July 13, 1870

Sent 4.40 P.M. Rec. 8.45 P.M.

Herzog von Gramont hat in der Kammer erklärt: "ich bin durch spanischen Bothschafter von der Entsagung des Prinzen von Hohenzollern auf spanische Thron-Candidatur unterrichtet worden. Unsere Verhandlungen haben nur diesen Punkt betroffen. Unsere Verhandlungen mit Preussen sind noch nicht beendigt. Ich bin deshalb noch nicht in der Lage eine endgültige Aufklärung zu geben." Weiter interpellirt, sagte Herzog von Gramont: "ich gebe nur das, was offiziell ist." Von der Rechten wird die Langsamkeit der Verhandlungen beklagt, indem sie die Würde der Nation beeinträchtige. Auf Antrag des Ministers wird weitere Discussion über obige Frage auf übermorgen verschoben. In der Kammer grosse patriotische Erregtheit.

No. 170

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2305 Paris, July 13, 1870

Rec. 8.45 P.M.

Das Zweideutige der Erklärung des Herzogs von Gramont wird auf Meinungs-Spaltungen im Ministerium geschoben. Es wird von Kriegspartei ausgebeutet, dass Thron-Entsagung nur vom

Vater vollzogen und eine Bestätigung derselben durch Prinz Leopold nicht vorhanden. Interessant wäre mir zu wissen, ob der König gegen Graf Benedetti sein Einverständniss über Thron-Entsagung gesprächsweise ausgesprochen.[1]

No. 171

GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2290 Vienna, July 13, 1870
Sent 4.49 P.M. Rec. 6.50 P.M.

Graf Beust las mir Brief an Fürst Metternich vor:
"Rathen Sie davon ab, dass man Frage des Prager Friedens mit der Candidatur-Frage vermische." Graf Beust fügte hinzu, er glaube, dass man diesem Rathe Rechnung trägt.

No. 172

BISMARCK to BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris. *Tg. Cph.*
(Kt) No. 27 Berlin, July 13, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 5.10 P.M.[2]

Es ist dringend nothwendig, dass Sie mir umgehend telegraphisch melden, was Herr von Gramont Ihnen gesagt hat, nachdem er Kenntniss von dem Verzicht des Erbprinzen erhalten. Von Stuttgart, München und Petersburg haben wir schon Andeutung darüber, und von Ihnen noch Nichts.

No. 173

Note of PRINCE REUSS, Ambassador at St. Petersburg, to BISMARCK.
No. A 2304 Berlin, July 13, 1870
"6 Uhr Abends." [3]

Fürst Gortschakoff hat soeben in meiner Gegenwart ein Telegramm an Okunieff und Brunnow diktirt ungefähr folgenden Inhaltes:

[1] Bismarck's marginal note: *Ich hoffe nicht, weiss es aber nicht.*
[2] Bismarck's autograph draft.
[3] This was among the documents textually cited by Caprivi in the Reichstag, Nov. 23, 1892: see *Stenographische Berichte des Reichstags. Session 1892–93*, i, p. 10.

Nous ne comprenons pas qu'après la résignation spontanée et absolue de Hohenzollern, le Gouvernement français ne regarde pas l'incident franco-prussien comme vidé dans l'intérêt de la paix, que la France veut, comme elle nous le dit.

No. 174

Note of GORCHAKOV to BISMARCK.

Berlin, July 13, 1870

Oubril vous communiquera aussitôt 1. réponse d'Okounew qui probablement arrivera demain après mon départ. Voici un télégramme de Brunnow que je vous prie de me restituer lecture prise. J'ai télégraphié à Brunnow et Okounew qu'après la renonciation spontanée et absolue de Hohenzollern, nous ne comprendrions pas que le différend Franco-Prussien ne soit terminé ou que de nouvelles exigences soient produites, *si la France désire la paix*, comme elle l'assure à l'Europe.

No. 175

BISMARCK to COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London.

Tg. Cph.

(Kt) No. 23 Berlin, July 13, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 6.50 P.M.

Wir hören von neuen Forderungen Gramonts gegen Werther. Dieser hat seit gestern Mittag *nichts* telegraphirt, trotz unserer wiederholten Fragen. Verdacht naheliegend dass man unsre telegraphische Correspondenz hemmt. Suchen Sie von der Gefälligkeit Lord Granville's zu erlangen, dass Lord Lyons chiffrirt telegraphisch veranlasst werde, Werther zu befragen wann und was er zuletzt telegraphirt habe.

General Roon bittet den Prinzen Adalbert zu ersuchen, dass er nicht über Frankreich telegraphire.

No. 176

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2311 Ems, July 13, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 8.20 P.M. Sent 9.10 P.M. Rec. 11.30 P.M.

Eben angekommenen Feldjäger aus Paris schicke auf Befehl Seiner Majestät sogleich weiter,[1] damit Eure Excellenz morgen früh den Bericht des Freiherrn von Werther erhalten. Er bringt von Gramont und Ollivier die Zumuthung, dass Se. Majestät der König Sich der Thronentsagung des Prinzen anschliesse und an den Kaiser persönlich einen entschuldigenden Brief zur Beschwichtigung der französischen Nation schreibe. Se. Majestät der König, welchem Graf Eulenburg und ich sofort Vortrag gehalten, hält die Zumuthung für erniedrigend, die Uebersendung derselben durch Baron[2] von Werther für schwer zu erklären. Seine Majestät ersucht Eure Excellenz, nachdem Sie den Brief gelesen, über die von Ihnen beantragte Beurlaubung des Freiherrn von Werther oder was sonst nöthig zu beschliessen und sofort telegraphisch Ihre Ansicht auszusprechen.[3]

[1] This word is lacking in the text as deciphered at Berlin.

[2] *Freiherrn* in the Berlin text.

[3] The second half of this telegram, in the course of its redaction, went through several changes, which are not without interest.

The earliest version (taking the place of the last two sentences in the final text) was as follows:

"S. Majestät der König will nicht offiziell, nur vertraulich von diesem Bericht Kenntniss haben und ersucht Ew. Exc., nach dem Eindruck den Sie von demselben, nachdem Sie den Bericht kennen werden, über die von Ihnen beantragte Beurlaubung des Frh. v. Werther zu beschliessen und sofort telegraphisch Ihre Ansicht auszusprechen."

Next, the first part of this was changed to:

"Se. Majestät der König hält, *in Uebereinstimmung mit Graf Eulenburg*, die Zumuthung für erniedrigend," etc. (as in the final text) — most of this new version being, not in Abeken's, but perhaps in Eulenburg's, handwriting.

With the change of the italicized phrase, this then became the definitive version.

No. 177

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. (Sent by courier.)
No. A 2333 Ems, July 13, 1870
"6 1/2 Uhr Abds."

Indem ich den anliegenden, durch Feldjäger Lieutenant Schulze mit der ausdrücklichen Bemerkung, dass *kein* Duplikat nach Berlin gegangen, hieher überbrachten Bericht des Frhn. v. Werther [1] ganz gehorsamst überreiche, habe ich nur Zeit mich auf mein heutiges Telegramm [2] zu beziehen, und zu bemerken, dass ich mit dem Hn. Graf v. Eulenburg Excellenz zusammen Sr. M. dem König Vortrag gehalten, und dass derselbe mit mir darin einig war, dass die Kenntniss, welche S. Majestät von demselben erlangt habe, vorerst nicht als amtliche Vorlegung betrachtet werden dürfe.

No. 178

Note of KING WILLIAM to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN.
Ad No. A 2333 Ems, July 13, 1870 [3]

Es ist nothwendig, an Werther zu chiffiren, dass ich indignirt sei über die Gramont-Olliviersche Zumuthung, und mir das Weitere vorbehalte.

No. 179

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to KING WILLIAM and to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2302 London, July 13, 1870 [4]
Sent 7.20 P.M. Rec. 8.35 P.M.

Lord Lyons telegraphirt von gestern Abend 7 Uhr 50 Min., dass die französische Regierung mit dem Rücktritt des Prinzen von Hohenzollern nicht befriedigt sei und heute in einem Conseil über weitere Beschlüsse berathen werde. Er habe stark remon-

[1] See No. 150. [2] See No. 176.

[3] Printed in the *Stenographische Berichte des Reichstags. Session 1892–93*, i, p. 20.

[4] This document was among those read by Caprivi before the Reichstag on Nov. 23, 1892, and is printed in the *Stenographische Berichte des Reichstags. Session 1892–93*, i, p. 10.

strirt. Lord Granville hat gleich zurücktelegraphirt, um den Botschafter anzuweisen, noch *vor* dem Conseil bestimmt zu erklären, dass Frankreich befriedigt sein müsse.

Hr. Gladstone, der mir dies eben *vertraulich* sagt, ist der Meinung, dass wir bis an die äusserste Grenze der Versöhnlichkeit gegangen sind, und Frankreich im flagrantesten Unrecht sein würde, wenn es trotzdem Krieg anfinge.[1]

No. 180

BARON VON CANITZ, Envoy at Madrid, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2313 Madrid, July 13, 1870

Sent 8 P.M. Rec. July 14, 5.45 A.M.

Telegramm No. 10, 11 erhalten, fehlt bis jetzt No. 9.[2]

Marschall Prim gestern Abend Verzicht des Fürsten von Hohenzollern für den —— —— —— [*sic*] erhalten. Sagasta sonderbarer Weise wusste heute Morgen noch nichts davon, aber Regent hat mit englischem Gesandten darüber gesprochen. Im Publikum war heute die Nachricht noch nicht bekannt. Zeitungen von gestern Abend und heute brachten keine Telegramme.

No. 181

BISMARCK to KING WILLIAM. *Tg. Cph.*

(Kz) No. 1214 Berlin, July 13, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 8.10 P.M.[3]

Angesichts der steigenden Entrüstung der öffentlichen Meinung gegen die Anmassungen Frankreichs, von der mir aus den verschiedensten Theilen Deutschlands die Symptome zugehen, halte ich es für geboten, dass wir eine Aufforderung[4] an Frankreich richten, sich über seine Intentionen gegen Deutschland zu

[1] On July 14 Bismarck telegraphed this despatch to his envoys at Dresden, Munich, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Darmstadt, and Brussels.

[2] The (Kt) Nos. 10 and 11 here referred to are the telegrams printed under Nos. 156 and 157 above. No. 9 I cannot identify.

[3] Bismarck's autograph draft.

[4] After *Aufforderung*, Bismarck first started to write *ulti*, then crossed it out.

erklären. Der Text eines solchen Actenstückes kann nur unter Mitwirkung der amtlichen und natürlichen Rathgeber Ew. Majestät festgestellt werden. Ich wage daher im Verein mit General v. Moltke u. v. Roon meine ehrfurchtsvolle Bitte zu wiederholen, dass Ew. M. nach Berlin zurückkehren geruhen wollen.

(Aus Paris wird gemeldet dass Gramont erklärt, Frankreichs Beschwerden gegen Preussen seien durch den Verzicht des Prinzen von Hohenzollern nicht erledigt. In Folge dessen wird schleunige Einberufung des norddeutschen Reichstags beabsichtigt.) [1]

No. 182

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2307 Paris, July 13, 1870

Sent 9.06 P.M. Rec. 12.34 A.M., July 14. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Der russische Geschäftsträger behauptet *soeben* vom Herzog von Gramont erfahren zu haben, dass Entsagung von Prinz Hohenzollern Vater hier nicht genüge und zur Lösung der Frage Frankreich noch vom *König* verlangt, ein Verbot an Erbprinz Leopold, die spanische Krone jemals anzunehmen, zu erlassen. Mit diesem Verbot wäre die ganze Sache erledigt, sonst Krieg unvermeidlich. Ob Benedetti wirklich solchen Auftrag erhalten, bleibt mir unbekannt. Gestern Herzog von Gramont mir solches Verlangen nicht ausgesprochen.

No. 183

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2308 Paris, July 13, 1870

Sent 10 P.M. Rec. 1.40 A.M., July 14.

Antwort auf No. 26 und 27.[2]

Ueber gestrige Unterredung mit Herzog v. Gramont liegt in Ems Bericht vor. Er hat mir gesagt, die Hohenzollernsche Ent-

[1] This second paragraph was apparently omitted in the final draft.

[2] See Nos. 166 and 172.

sagung wäre Nebensache und wichtiger die Beilegung der Verletzung Frankreichs durch den König, nämlich durch Geheimhaltung der spanisch-Hohenzollernschen Verhandlungen. Diese Verstimmung zu beseitigen, schlug er Brief des Königs an den Kaiser vor, worin Sich der König dahin ausspreche, dass wenn der Prinz von Hohenzollern zur Annahme der Krone ermächtigt, Er nicht den Interessen und Würde Frankreichs habe zu nahe treten wollen. Der König schlösse Sich der Entsagung des Prinzen Leopold an mit dem Wunsch und Hoffnung, dass jeder Grund nun zum weitern Zwiespalt wegfalle. Er bat mich, dies dem König zu berichten, weil er sonst den Grafen Benedetti damit beauftragen würde. Ueber den Act der Entsagung, den er in meiner Gegenwart erhielt, hatte er gestern nichts gesagt, auch dass dieser Brief-Gedanke nicht als Bedingung zur Lösung der Frage gestellt, aber als dringend wünschenswerth im Interesse seiner ministeriellen Stellung und zur Beruhigung der Gemüther.

No. 184

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2317 Ems, July 13, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 10.15 P.M. Sent 11.15 P.M. Rec. 11.59 P.M.

Nachdem Seine Majestät der König das in meinem Telegramm[1] Gemeldete an Graf Benedetti hat sagen lassen, hat letzterer von Neuem Audienz erbeten, weil er Depesche vom Herzog von Gramont habe; er bedürfe noch einer Antwort. Der König hat ihm wieder sagen lassen durch Adjutanten: Wenn was er zu sagen habe, mit der persönlichen Frage der Thron-Candidatur zusammenhänge, so habe Seine Majestät zu dem was er heute Morgen ihm gesagt, nichts weiter hinzuzufügen; wolle er, Graf Benedetti, weitere Fragen daran knüpfen, so möge er sich an den Minister wenden. Graf Benedetti hat sich einstweilen dabei beruhigt.[2]

[1] See No. 163.

[2] On the copy of this telegram as deciphered at Berlin there is the marginal note: *Herr Dr. Busch ist den Weisungen des H. Chefs Exc. gemäss instruirt.*

No. 185

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2309 Paris, July 13, 1870

Sent 10.26 P.M. Rec. 12.30 A.M., July 14.

Antwort auf Telegramm No. 25.[1] Bei dem Vorschlage des Herzog von Gramont, dass der König ein Schreiben an den Kaiser richten sollte, habe ihm bemerkt, dass dieses durch seine Erklärung vom 6ten d. Mts. erschwert,[2] indem letztere den König verletzten [*sic*] müsste. Herzog von Gramont hat darauf nur unwesentliche Aufklärungen gegeben, die zu keiner Beruhigung dienen können.

No. 186

BARON VON ROSENBERG, Envoy at Stuttgart, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2314 Stuttgart, July 13, 1870

Sent 11.10 P.M. Rec. July 14, 12.10 A.M.

Die nationale Haltung Württembergs ist in einem gestrigen Ministerrath ohne Discussion beschlossen und die Geldmittel bereit gestellt.

No. 187

BISMARCK'S Revision of the 'Ems Telegram'

A. BISMARCK to (1) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Schwerin; the Ministry of State at (2) Strelitz, (3) Oldenburg, and (4) Brunswick; and the Senate at (5) Bremen, and (6) Lübeck.

Tg. in claris

No. A 2301 (Kz. No. 1217) Berlin, July 13, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 11.15 P.M.[3]

(*Cito.*)

Nachdem die Nachrichten von der Entsagung des Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern der Kaiserlich Französischen Regierung von

[1] See No. 162.

[2] Bismarck has underlined this word, with the marginal comment: *wirklich!*

[3] The original draft of this famous document, which Bismarck, according to his account in the *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* (vol. ii, p. 90), drew up in the presence of Moltke and Roon, is not to be found in the archives of the German Foreign Office.

der Königlich Spanischen amtlich mitgetheilt worden sind, hat der französische Botschafter in Ems an Seine Majestät den König noch [1] die Forderung gestellt, ihn zu autorisiren, dass er nach Paris telegraphire, dass Seine Majestät der König sich für alle Zukunft verpflichte, niemals wieder seine Zustimmung zu geben, wenn die Hohenzollern auf ihre Kandidatur zurückkommen sollten. Seine Majestät hat es darauf abgelehnt, den französischen Botschafter nochmals zu empfangen, und demselben durch den Adjutanten vom Dienst sagen lassen, dass Seine Majestät dem Botschafter nichts weiter mitzutheilen [2] habe.

B. BISMARCK to the Prussian representatives at (1) Dresden, Altenburg, and Dessau, (2) Munich, (3) Stuttgart, (4) Karlsruhe, (5) Darmstadt, (6) Hamburg, (7) Weimar and Meiningen.

Tg. in claris

No. A 2301 (Kz. No. 1216) Berlin, July 13, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 11.18 P.M.

(*Cito.*)

Theilen Sie dort mit.

(Follows the revised text of the Ems telegram, as given in A.)

To BARON VON WERTHERN at Munich alone. Additional *Tg. Cph.* (Kz.) No. 1218

Sent to the Tg. Station 11.15 P.M.

Bei Mittheilung unseres offenen Telegramms über Forderung des französischen Botschafters fügen Sie hinzu:

Those archives contain two drafts of the document (Kz. No. 1216 and 1217), neither of which is in Bismarck's handwriting. Kz. No. 1217 appears to be the earlier of the two; it contains two corrections, as noted below, the one by Bismarck, the other (apparently) in Bucher's handwriting; and it has Bucher's initials at the bottom, as does Kz. No. 1216.

Bismarck's redaction of Abeken's telegram has been printed in innumerable places, but his additional remarks in the despatches to Munich, London, and St. Petersburg are here published for the first time.

The text as given out to the newspapers on the night of July 13 does not seem to have been quite identical with that which Bismarck transmitted to his representatives abroad. Cf., *e.g.*, the version printed in the *Staatsarchiv*, xix (1870), No. 4033.

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[1] This word is inserted in Bucher's hand.

[2] This word is inserted in Bismarck's handwriting, in place of *zu sagen*.

Seine Majestät der König von Bayern wird ein Gefühl dafür haben, dass Benedetti den König auf der Promenade wider dessen Willen provocirend angeredet hat, um obige Forderung stellen zu können.

C. BISMARCK to the North German representatives at (1) London, (2) St. Petersburg, (3) Florence, (4) Brussels, (5) The Hague, (6) Vienna, (7) Berne, (8) Constantinople, and (9) Madrid[1]
Tg. Cph.

No. A 2301 (Kz. No. 1223) Berlin, July 14, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 2.30 A.M.

(Gives the revised text of the Ems telegram as in A and B.)
Theilen Sie dies dort unverzüglich mit.

(To London alone.) Lord Granville bitte ich ferner zu sagen, dass Benedetti Seine Majestät auf der Promenade wider dessen Willen provocirend angeredet, um obige Forderung stellen zu können.

(To St. Petersburg alone.) Fügen Sie hinzu: Seine Majestät der Kaiser wird ein Gefühl dafür haben, dass Benedetti den König auf der Promenade wider dessen Willen provocirend angeredet, um obige Forderung stellen zu können.

No. 188

HERR VON EICHMANN, Envoy at Dresden, to KING WILLIAM. Sent by courier.

No. A 2327 Dresden, July 13, 1870
Rec. July 14.

Nachdem der Minister von Nostitz-Wallwitz seinem auf einer Reise im Lande befindlichen Souveraine von den Mittheilungen Meldung gemacht hatte, die ich ihm über die spanische Thron-Angelegenheit und die Möglichkeit eines Krieges mit Frankreich zu machen beauftragt war, ist er von Seiner Majestät dem König von Sachsen angewiesen worden sich in dem Sinn gegen mich zu äussern, dass Sachsen seine Verpflichtungen gegen den Norddeutschen Bund nachkommen werde, dass König Johann aber

[1] Sent via London.

vertraue, es werde der Weisheit Eurer Königlichen Majestät gelingen, wenn die Verhältnisse es gestatteten, die Gefahr des Krieges von Deutschland abzuwenden. Ich glaubte dem Minister erwiedern zu dürfen, dass ich nicht ermangeln würde Eurer Majestät hiervon unterthänigst Meldung zu machen und dass, wenn auch die erhabenen Gesinnungen Seiner Majestät des Königs von Sachsen Eurer Majestät bekannt seien, es Allerhöchstdenselben doch erfreulich und wohlthuend sein würde, in einem ernsten Augenblick den Ausdruck solcher Gesinnungen zu vernehmen.

No. 189

BARON VON WERTHERN, Envoy at Munich, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2340 Munich, July 13, 1870
Rec. July 14.

Im Laufe der heut begonnenen Debatte über das Militairbudgets äusserte Gf. Bray, dass bei der ernsten Lage jede Veränderung der Organisation der Armee ein Fehler sein würde; vermied aber jede Andeutung über die Haltung der Regierung eben dieser ernsten Lage gegenüber, auf die man eigentlich gerechnet hatte.

No. 190

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to BISMARCK. Sent by English courier. *Despatch in claris*
No. A 2368 London, July 13, 1870
Rec. July 15, 1870.[1]

Im Verfolge meines heutigen Telegramms No. 27 [2] beehre ich mich noch einige Aeusserungen des englischen Premier-Ministers zu Eurer Excellenz Kenntniss zu bringen, welche meiner Unterredung mit ihm einen sehr befriedigenden Character verleihen. Er sprach sich in seiner offenen und ehrlichen Weise so entschieden über das Benehmen Frankreichs in dieser ganzen Angelegenheit aus, dass mir nicht der geringste Zweifel darüber blieb, dass er es von Anfang an mit der äussersten Verwunderung und Missbilligung, was die Form und den Ton seines Auftretens

[1] Most of this despatch has been printed by Rheindorf, *op. cit.*, pp. 164, 165.
[2] See No. 179.

betrifft, betrachtet hat, und dass er, wenn er ihm auch nicht eine gewisse Berechtigung in Betreff der Opposition gegen die Wahl eines Hohenzollernschen Prinzen für den spanischen Thron abspricht, doch mit dem grössten Unwillen erfahren würde, dass die französische Regierung mit dem freiwilligen Rücktritt des Erbprinzen nicht zufrieden sei, und man von der Regierung Seiner Majestät des Königs noch andere Erklärungen und Concessionen verlange. Er sagte mir, ich wüsste, dass er einen grossen Werth auf die englisch-französische Allianz gelegt habe, und er thue dies besonders aus dem Grunde, weil er glaube, dass die beiden Nationen zusammen nicht leicht ein Unrecht begehen würden; wenn also dennoch eine derselben dies thun sollte, so sei es gewiss, dass die andere sich von ihr trennen würde; dies würde der Fall sein, wenn Frankreich das Unrecht beginge, Krieg gegen Preussen zu führen, nachdem der Vorwand dazu weggeräumt sei. Er schien übrigens zu fürchten, dass dies geschehen werde und bemerkte, dass er zwar nicht glaube, dass alle Mitglieder der französischen Regierung den Krieg wollten, dass aber der Kaiser (the great puller of the wires) ihn zu wollen scheine. Als ich hinzufügte, dass auch die Kaiserin wohl einen sehr üblen Einfluss übe, sprach Herr Gladstone sich mit grosser Lebhaftigkeit über den verderblichen politischen Einfluss dieser persönlich liebenswürdigen hohen Dame aus.

Auf meine Bemerkung, dass der gegenwärtige Incidenzfall, auch wenn er nicht zum Kriege führe, doch jedenfalls das Gute haben werde, dass er über den Animus der französischen Regierung gegen uns nicht länger den leisesten Zweifel lasse, erwiederte der englische Premier mir zustimmend, und sagte dann mit lobenswerther Offenheit, er habe allerdings im vorigen Winter, als die vertrauliche Correspondenz über den Entwaffnungs-Plan zwischen uns stattgefunden, die Ansicht gehabt, dass der Kaiser Napoleon sich eine bessere Stellung als wir gesetzt hätte — was mir beweist, dass der damalige Vorschlag Lord Clarendons von Louis Napoleon ausging, um uns in Nachtheil zu setzen —, gestand aber, als ich schnell erwiederte, dass die gegenwärtigen Ereignisse unseren damaligen Widerstand eclatant rechtfertigten, ohne Widerspruch die Richtigkeit dieser Bemerkung zu.

Wenn aus dieser ganzen Unterredung nun auch nichts weiter gefolgert werden kann, als dass die englische Regierung, wenn Frankreich es jetzt zum Kriege mit uns treibt, mit ihrem ganzen moralischen Gewicht auf unserer Seite stehen wird, so ist dies einstweilen schon viel gewonnen.

Herr Gladstone äusserte sich auch sehr zufrieden über den Ton, den die englische Presse über unseren Conflict mit Frankreich angenommen hat, und lobte vor allen anderen Blättern die "Daily News," welche ja gerade ganz befriedigend für uns ist, sowie den "Daily Telegraph" und auch die "Times." Die "Morning Post," meinte er, sei ja immer sehr französisch gesinnt gewesen, doch hat auch dieses Blatt, dessen Redacteur gestern bei mir war, um sich von mir Aufklärungen geben zu lassen, und gerecht gegen uns zu sein, heute einen guten Artikel, wie aus meinem heutigen gehorsamsten Bericht über die englische Presse des Näheren hervorgeht.

Als ich den "Standard" als das Organ und den Ausdruck des Preussenhasses einer sehr hoch gestellten Clique bezeichnete, möchte Herr Gladstone dies zwar nicht ausdrücklich bejahen, widersprach aber eben so wenig meiner Ansicht.

No. 191

BARON VON GEROLD, Envoy at Washington, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2312 Washington, July 14, 1870
Sent 1.05 A.M. Rec. 4.40 A.M.

Die Antwort der Regierung ist: dass beide kriegführende Theile das Recht haben, maritime Hülfsmittel hier anzuschaffen, ohne jedoch das Neutralitäts-Gesetz zu verletzen.

Im Congress sollen Sympathien für Deutschland kund werden. Jung Deutschland in Amerika wird nicht unthätig bleiben.

No. 192

BISMARCK to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2311 Berlin, July 14, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 2.30 A.M. Sent 3.35 A.M. Rec. 4.05 A.M.[1]

Antwort auf Telegramm No. 28.[2]

[1] Bismarck's autograph draft. [2] See No. 176.

Es scheint mir unmöglich, dass der König eine so beleidigende Zumuthung aus der Hand des eigenen Botschafters auf Grund eines mündlichen Auftrags eines fremden Ministers entgegennimmt. Wenn nun Herzog von Gramont nachher sagt, er habe dies und das gegen Freiherrn von Werther gar nicht geäussert? — Wir bedürfen in solchem ernsten Fall einer authentischen schriftlichen Fassung der fremden Regierung. Ich rathe, Freiherrn von Werther telegraphisch zu sagen, dass der König den Bericht als non avenu betrachtet und ihm befiehlt, dem Herzog von Gramont nachträglich zu erklären, er vermöge den etwa übernommenen Auftrag nicht auszuführen und überlasse dem Herzog von Gramont, seine Ansichten und Forderungen auf anderem Wege und durch andere Organe zur Kenntniss des Königs zu bringen. Sobald er dies bestellt hat, müsse er mittheilen, dass er Urlaub erbeten und erhalten habe, und sofort nach Berlin kommen, um Aufklärungen zu geben. Er kann, wie ich glaube, nach diesem Vorgange jetzt dort nicht bleiben.[1]

No. 193

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2333 Ems, July 14, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 6.20 A.M.

Bericht durch Feldjäger erhalten, auf Befehl Sr. Majestät gleich weiter nach Berlin geschickt. Se. Majestät indignirt über die Zumuthung; behält sich das Weitere vor.

[1] There is at hand an earlier draft by Bismarck for this telegram to Abeken, a draft which, although not sent, presents some points of interest. It reads:

Antwort. Ich bitte Werther den Befehl zugehen zu lassen, dass er sich sofort nach Berlin begebe. Er wird zu seinem Berichte und zu den Gründen, die ihn zur Uebernahme eines so unmöglichen Auftrages veranlasst haben, Erklärungen zu geben haben. Ueber die Beantwortung der beleidigenden Zumuthung berichte ich sobald sie eingegangen, falls nicht die Herkunft Sr. Maj. früher bevorsteht. Die Berufung des Reichstages scheint nunmehr unaufschieblich.

No. 194

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2333 Ems, July 14, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 7 A.M.

S. Majestät hat vorerst offiziell keine Kenntniss von Ihrem Bericht über Unterredung mit Gramont und Ollivier, und nimmt einstweilen an, Ew. Exc. hätten den Auftrag noch nicht ausgerichtet.

No. 195

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2333 Ems, July 14, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 10.50 A.M.[1]

Se. Majestät der König sieht Ihren Bericht No. 127[2] vom 12^ten^ über Unterredung mit Gramont und Ollivier als non avenu an, befiehlt, dass Ew. Exc. dem Herzog von Grammont nachträglich erklären, Sie vermöchten die Aufträge nicht auszuführen und überliessen ihm, seine Ansichten und Forderungen auf anderem Wege und durch andere Organe zur Kenntniss des Königs zu bringen. Sobald Sie dies bestellt haben, wollen Sie mittheilen, dass Sie einen Urlaub erbeten und erhalten haben, und sofort nach Berlin abreisen.

No. 196

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2335 Ems, July 14, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 11.15 A.M. Sent 11.50 A.M. Rec. 1.25 P.M.[3]

Seine Majestät der König wird spätestens morgen Abend in Berlin sein. An Freiherrn von Werther ist nach Wortlaut Eurer Excellenz Telegramms 30[4] gleich von hier aus der Befehl Seiner

[1] This telegram bears the note in Abeken's handwriting:
Von S. M. d. König genehmigt. Abzusenden!
Wörtlich nach dem anliegenden Telegramm v. Gf. Bismarck [No. 192].

[2] See No. 150.

[3] This telegram bears Abeken's note: *Von Sr. Majestät genehmigt. Abzusenden!*

[4] See No. 192.

Majestät des Königs telegraphirt worden, weil Eile wichtig schien. Haben Eure Excellenz nach Kenntnissnahme vom Bericht selbst noch etwas zuzufügen, so stellt Seine Majestät dieses *telegraphisch* zu thun anheim. Den Grafen Benedetti wird Seine Majestät der König *hier* nicht mehr empfangen.

No. 197

GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2337 Vienna, July 14, 1870
Sent 11.40 A.M. Rec. 1.25 P.M.

Ich habe befohlene Mittheilung dem Reichskanzler gemacht; er las mir Telegramm aus Paris vom 13. Nachmittags vor, worin er ersucht wird, Garantieforderung in Berlin zu unterstützen. Graf Beust sagte, dies werde er nun wohl nicht mehr thun, er beschränke sich darauf es mir zu sagen; er fügte hinzu, gerade gestern hätten seine Nachrichten aus Paris versöhnlich gelautet.

No. 198

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to KING WILLIAM and to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2387 London, July 14, 1870
Sent 11.50 A.M. Rec. at Berlin, July 15, 4.25 P.M.

Lord Granville schreibt mir eben:

"Ich habe in der Nacht ein Telegramm von Ihrer Majestät erhalten, welche einen leidenschaftlichen Appell für Frieden macht. Bitte unterrichten Sie den König davon."

Ich fahre gleich zu Lord Granville um ihm zu sagen, dass er sich einzig und allein nach Paris wenden müsse.

No. 199

BARON VON CANITZ, Envoy at Madrid, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2352 Madrid, July 14, 1870
Sent 11.50 A.M. Rec. 8.50 P.M.

Rascon telegraphirte gestern 3 Uhr Nachmittag aus Berlin, dass über den Verzicht dort nur die Nachricht des Freiherrn von

Werther, keine directe bis jetzt —— —— —— [*sic*] sei; Sagasta glaubt in Folge dessen noch an der Authenticität des Hohenzollernschen Telegramms zweifeln zu dürfen.

No. 200

BISMARCK to BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2308 Berlin, July 14, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 11.55 A.M.

Antw[ort] 63 erhalten.[1] Es liegt nicht in Ew. Excellenz Beruf, sich zum Organ des Herzogs von Gramont für Aufträge desselben an S. M. den König zu machen, namentlich wenn dieselben so beleidigende Zumuthungen enthalten wie die des Entschuldigungsbriefes und ihr amtlicher Wortlaut so wichtig ist wie in diesem Augenblick. Mittheilungen der Art können an Sie nur schriftlich, sonst an mich durch den Vertreter Frankreichs gelangen. Sagen Sie das dem Herzog von Gramont und betrachten Sie Ihren Bericht, der in Ems vorliegt und dessen Inhalt mir S. M. mit Entrüstung telegraphirt, als amtlich nicht geschrieben. Sagen Sie dem Herzoge von Gramont, Sie hätten Urlaub zum Gebrauche einer Kur nachgesucht.

No. 201

BISMARCK to COUNT ZU EULENBURG. *Tg.*
No. 341 Ems Berlin, July 14, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 11.55 A.M. Sent 12.16 P.M. Rec. 3 P.M.

1. (*In claris.*) Es scheint dringend nothwendig, dass die Minister schleunig hier unter Vorsitz Seiner Majestät versammelt werden. 2. (*Cph.*) An denselben en chifr. Unsre Stellung als Minister würde der öffentlichen Meinung gegenüber nicht haltbar bleiben wenn der König den Grafen Benedetti in Ems nochmals empfängt.[2] 3. (Für Camphausen.)[3] Ew. Exc. Anwesenheit hier ist dringlich.

[1] See No. 183.

[2] Marginal note, probably by Abeken: *Inhalt S. M. dem König von mir mitgetheilt, im Augenblick der Abfahrt nach Coblenz.*

[3] Prussian Minister of Finance.

No. 202

GENERAL VON SCHWEINITZ, Envoy at Vienna, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2338 Vienna, July 14, 1870
Sent 12.30 P.M. Rec. 1.40 P.M.

Oeffentliche Stimmung mehr und mehr zu Gunsten völliger Enthaltung Oesterreich-Ungarns; von militairischen Vorbereitungen sind keine Anzeichen vorhanden.

No. 203

BARON VON ROSENBERG, Envoy at Stuttgart, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2342 Stuttgart, July 14, 1870
Sent 1.18 P.M. Rec. 3.55 P.M.

Frh. v. Varnbüler sagte mir, in Folge seiner Vorstellung habe gestern der französische Gesandte nach Paris telegraphirt, Frankreich habe in Folge der letzten Forderung an den König von Preussen in Württemberg alles Terrain verloren, und dass nun von einer Neutralität in Süddeutschland nicht mehr die Rede sein könne. Der bayersche Gesandte hat mir mitgetheilt, Graf Bray werde dem französischen Gesandten in München heute eröffnen, das Nationalgefühl sei auch in Bayern so erregt, dass die Prüfung des casus foederis nicht mehr stattfinden könne.

No. 204

BISMARCK to BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2333 Berlin, July 14, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 1.55 P.M.

Soeben geht mir Ew. Excellenz Bericht 127[1] vom 12ten aus Ems zu. Da Sie leider den Auftrag von Gramont angenommen haben, seine Zumuthungen zu übermitteln, so zeigen Sie demselben an, dass ich vermuthe, Sie müssten den H. v. Gramont missverstanden haben, und als Minister des Königs es ablehne, die französischen Forderungen zum Vortrag bei Seiner Majestät zu bringen, so lange sie mir nicht in authentischem Wortlaut durch

[1] See No. 150.

den Vertreter Frankreichs überreicht werden. Zugleich stelle ich Ew. Excellenz anheim, dem Herzog von Gramont zu melden, dass Seine Majestät der König Ihnen den beauftragten Urlaub bewilligt habe. Jedenfalls ersuche ich Ew. Exc. auf Befehl des Königs, sich ohne Aufschub unter Uebergabe der Geschäfte an Graf Solms hierher zu begeben.[1]

No. 205

GENERAL VON RÖDER, Envoy at Berne, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2344 Berne, July 14, 1870
Sent 2.10 P.M. Rec. 6.30 P.M.

Mittheilung dem Bundesrath gemacht.[2]

Allgemeine Entrüstung über die Anmassung und Befriedigung über die Antwort des Königs.

No. 206

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2348 Paris, July 14, 1870
Sent 2.10 P.M. Rec. 7.20 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Antwort auf Telegramme 3 und 5[3] aus Ems.

Herzog von Gramont seit vorgestern nicht gesehen und mir gemeldet Diplomaten nicht empfangen zu können. Ihm gegenüber kann ich nunmehr seinen Brief als non avenu unausgerichtet bezeichnen, indem ich bereits gestern erfahren, dass er unterdessen neuen Vorschlag an Seine Majestät den König habe gelangen lassen, nemlich das Verbot an Erbprinz Leopold auszusprechen, niemals mehr auf spanische Thron-Kandidatur zurückzukommen. Letzteres hat mir Lord Lyons bestätigt, welcher mir sagte, zu diesem Vorschlage die Bitte der bons offices Englands nur ad referendum genommen zu haben. Herzog von Gramont hat ihm bestimmt erklärt, mit Annahme unserer Seits jenes Vorschlages wäre die ganze Incidenzfrage friedlich beseitigt.

[1] This despatch was telegraphed to Ems 2.14 P.M., and received there 3.55 P.M.
[2] See No. 187.
[3] See Nos. 193 and 195.

Bei Ablehnung hat Herzog von Gramont Kriegsfall an Lord Lyons angedeutet. Die Rechte der Kammer wäre ohnehin kriegerischer als das Ministerium, um dadurch letzteres zu stürzen. — Lord Lyons glaubt, dass Frankreich Allianz-Pression Italiens [*sic*] die Räumung Cività-Vecchia in Aussicht stelle. Auf Befragen Lord Lyons habe ich ihm gesagt, dass ich den letzten Vorschlag Frankreichs als unannehmbar bezeichnete.

Auf morgen erwartet man entscheidende Erklärungen in der Kammer.

No. 207

HERR VON BALAN, Envoy at Brussels, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2346 Brussels, July 14, 1870
Sent 3.01 P.M. Rec. 7 P.M.

Telegramm No. 3,[1] 4 und zweimal 5 heute früh erhalten und in geeigneter Weise auch beim König verwerthet, der nicht heute, wie er beabsichtigte, nach dem Lager abgeht. Auf dem Ministerium der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten in Folge eines Briefs von Baron Beyens von gestern Abend mehr friedliche Auffassung als gestern. Auch Börse trotz epileptischer Pariser Presse beruhigter.

No. 208

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to KING WILLIAM and to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2349 London, July 14, 1870
Sent 3.10 P.M. Rec. 7.55 P.M. at Berlin.[2]

Telegramm No. 23,[3] 24 und 25.[4] erhalten, und die befohlenen Mittheilungen an Lord Granville gemacht. Derselbe kam gerade soeben zu mir, um mich zu fragen, ob auch Ew. Majestät der französischen Regierung irgend eine Mittheilung in Bezug auf die spanische Candidatur hätte machen lassen oder nicht,[5] und ersuchte dies baldmöglichst zu wissen. Telegramm 25

[1] See No. 187.
[2] Most of this telegram is printed by Rheindorf, *op. cit.*, p. 166.
[3] See No. 175. [4] See No. 187.
[5] Bismarck's marginal comment: *Nein, erscheint auch nach der Haltung Frankreichs nicht thunlich.*

erwähnt nur die Mittheilung der spanischen Regierung. Ich bitte um Allergnädigste Befehle über diesen Punkt.

Lord Granville hat die sofortige Zusammenberufung eines Ministerraths verlangt, um zu berathen, was noch zu thun sei, um wo möglich den Frieden zu retten. Ich habe ihm gesagt, dass das Schicksal Europa's grossentheils in Englands Hand liege, indem ein Druck mit dem ganzen Gewicht seiner Macht auf Frankreich vielleicht allein noch im Stande sei, dasselbe zurückzuhalten.

No. 209

HERR VON EICHMANN, Envoy at Dresden, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2342 Dresden, July 14, 1870
Sent 3.18 P.M. Rec. 5.15 P.M.

Tel. en clair[1] u. No. 11 bis 14 erhalten. Aufträge sofort ausgeführt. Die Minister v. Nostitz und v. Fabrice sehr überrascht, begriffen durchaus den Ernst der Lage, äusserten sich beide correct, ersterer anscheinend mit Vertrauen und deutschem Gefühl. Kronprinz soll sehr überrascht gewesen seyn. Minister Friesen noch abwesend. Rückäusserung aus Altenburg durchaus patriotisch.

No. 210

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to KING WILLIAM and to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2350 London, July 14, 1870
Sent 4.35 P.M. Rec. at Berlin 7.10 P.M.[2]

Lord Granville bittet mich Euerer Majestät nachstehendes als Resultat des Ministerraths zu telegraphiren:

"Wir empfehlen Preussen, dass, da der König in die Annahme der Kandidatur gewilligt und dadurch gewissermassen sich an der Kombination betheiligt hat, Seine Majestät ohne die geringste Verletzung seiner Würde der französischen Regierung mittheilen könnte, dass er in gleicher Weise in die Zurücknahme

[1] See No. 187.
[2] Also printed by Rheindorf, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

der Annahme gewilligt habe, wenn Frankreich seine Forderung einer Verpflichtung für die Zukunft fallen lässt. Eine solche Mittheilung auf den Rath einer befreundeten Macht würde ein weiterer und zwar der schönste Beweis des Wunsches des Königs sein, den Frieden von Europa zu bewahren."

Vorstehendes ist eine wörtliche Uebersetzung.

No. 211

BISMARCK to BARON VON WERTHERN, Envoy at Munich. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2339 Berlin, July 14, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 6.05 P.M.

Bericht 85 [1] erhalten. Wenn Sie auf vertrauliche Anfrage keine genügende Antwort erhalten, so fragen Sie amtlich an, auf welche Unterstützung wir im Falle eines französischen Angriffs innerhalb von 3 Wochen nach dem Tage der Anordnung unsrer Mobilisation werden rechnen können. Zu Ihrer Information bemerke ich, dass Zögerung oder Zweifel am Casus Föderis von uns dem Bruch des Bündnisses gleich erachtet wird. Tauffkirchens Meldung über Anschluss Italiens an Frankreich ist ohne alles Fundament. Sie stammt von Nigra im persönlichen Dienste der Kaiserin Eugenie.

No. 212

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2357 Paris, July 14, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 9.35 P.M. Rec. July 15, 3 A.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Nach Massgabe der Telegramme No. 25 und 28 [2] habe ich mich gegen Herzog von Gramont geäussert, ich müsste die durch mich übermittelten Vorschläge als non avenue betrachten, und könnte solches durch Organe des französischen Ministeriums schriftlich formulirt zur Kenntniss unseres Kabinets kommen. Herzog von Gramont schien auf seine Vorschläge keinen besonderen Werth zu legen, und habe er geglaubt, sie leichter durch mich als durch

[1] See No. 155. [2] See Nos. 162 and 200.

einen französischen Agenten anbringen zu können. Ich habe ihm ferner angezeigt, dass ich Urlaub erbeten und bewilligt erhalten, morgen nach Berlin abreise. So eben von Herzog von Gramont kommend, finde ich Telegramm No. 29[1] vor und konnte mich daher nicht buchstäblich danach richten.

No. 213

BISMARCK to COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2349 Berlin, July 14, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 10 P.M.

Antwort auf Telegramm No. 29.[2] Seine Majestät hat der französischen Regierung irgend eine Mittheilung in Bezug auf der spanischen Candidatur *nicht* machen lassen. Dies erscheint auch nach der Haltung Frankreichs nicht thunlich.

No. 214

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2354 Ems, July 14, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 10.30 P.M. Sent 11 P.M. Rec. July 15, 12.53 A.M.

Telegramm No. 31[3] eben Sr. Majestät bei dessen Rückkehr aus Coblenz vorgelegt; Se. Majestät einverstanden; uberlässt etwaige weitere Aeusserungen auf des Frh. v. Werthers Telegramm No. 65[4] von heute Ew. Excellenz. Se. Majestät hat Gf. Benedetti nicht mehr empfangen. Letzterer ist bei Abfahrt des Königs nach Coblenz auf den Bahnhof gekommen nur um sich zu verabschieden. Es bleibt dabei dass Se. Majestät morgen 8 Uhr von hier abreisen, um noch 8 Abends in Berlin zu seyn; ob Ew. Excellenz ihm etwa bis Brandenburg entgegenkommen wollen, stellt Ihrem Ermessen nach Zeit und Umständen anheim.

[1] See No. 204.
[2] See No. 208.
[3] See No. 204.
[4] See No. 206.

No. 215

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to KING WILLIAM and to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2358 London, July 14, 1870
Sent 11.17 P.M. Rec. at Berlin July 15, 3.17 A.M.

Nachstehendes ist mir im engsten Vertrauen erzählt worden:

Auf einem Diner bei dem französischen Botschafter, wo auch Lord Granville und der österreichische Botschafter assen, hat Prinz v. Wales vorgestern einem der anwesenden Gäste gesagt, Graf Apponyi [1] habe ihm soeben mitgetheilt, dass, im Falle eines Krieges zwischen Frankreich und Preussen, Oesterreich auf Seite des ersteren stehen werde. Der Prinz ist freudig erregt gewesen. Gestern Abend sprach er sich auch gegen mich mit der alten Bitterkeit wegen Dänemark aus und zeigte deutlich seine Freude über die Wahrscheinlichkeit des Krieges.

No. 216

COUNT VON FLEMMING, Envoy at Karlsruhe, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*
No. A 2359 Karlsruhe, July 14, 1870
Sent 11.40 P.M. Rec. July 15, 4.05 A.M.

Tel. N. 14 erhalten. Auf meine Anfrage an Herrn von Freydorf wurde mir in Gegenwart des Kriegsministers erklärt:

Dass die sämmtlichen badischen Streitkräfte in den Stärken und in dem Zeitpunkt zur Disposition des Bundeskanzlers gestellt würden, wie solche in dem preussischen Kriegsministerium und dem Chef des Generalstabs vorliegenden Mobilmachungsplan für 1870 enthalten sind, und voraussichtlich unter derjenigen Disponirung der Truppen, wie sie mit dem preussischen Generalstabe früher verabredet worden.

[1] Austro-Hungarian ambassador at London.

No. 217

BISMARCK to COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London.

Tg. Cph.

No. A 2350 London, July 14, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 11.55 P.M.[1]

Antw[ort] 30[2] erhalten. Der König kommt morgen, und wird von Ihrer Mittheilung gewiss peinlich berührt sein. Wir haben unter dem Druck der öffentlichen Drohungen Frankreichs, wie man in England anerkennt, eine so friedliebende Mässigung bethätigt, dass jedes weitre Zeichen davon eine Unterwerfung unter französischer Willkühr darstellen und eine Demüthigung sein würde, die das mit Recht beleidigte Nationalgefühl Deutschlands nicht erträgt. Ich befinde mich in der Unmöglichkeit, dem König eine Erklärung der angedeuteten Art anzurathen. Die Haltung unsrer öffentlichen Meinung beweist, dass die ganze Nation unter dem Einflusse der französischen Drohungen zu dem Entschlusse gelangt ist, den schwersten Krieg der Unterwerfung des Königs unter das unberechtigte Ansinnen Frankreichs vorzuziehen. Wir hatten von England eine Anerkennung der versöhnlichen Haltung des Königs, aber nicht die Befürwortung neuer Ansprüche Frankreichs gehofft.

Die Regierung Preussens hat mit der Annahme der Candidatur Hohenzollern gar keine Beziehung, nicht einmal Kenntniss davon gehabt. Sie kann also auch keine Willigung in dieselbe durch Einwilligung in ihre Zurücknahme compensiren. Private Acte aber von einem Könige zu fordern, kann kein Gegenstand von Staatsverhandlungen sein.

[1] Bismarck's autograph draft. This telegram is also printed in Rheindorf, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

[2] See No. 210.

No. 218

KING WILLIAM to GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN.
Ad No. A 2349, 2350 Ems, July 14 (15?), 1870

Auf No. 346 (396?) (u. No. 22)[1] ist noch von hier aus zu antworten, dass ich niemals eine Mittheilung an das französische Gouvernement von der spanischen Candidatur gemacht habe.[2]

No. 219

BARON VON ROSENBERG, Envoy at Stuttgart, to BISMARCK.
No. A 2390 Stuttgart, July 14, 1870
Rec. July 15.

Zur Vervollständigung meiner Telegramme von gestern und heute beehre ich mich, Folgendes über die Haltung der hiesigen Regierung zu berichten.

Es waren in der nationalen Parthei Aeusserungen des Ministers von Varnbüler bekannt geworden, die Besorgnisse über die politische Haltung der Regierung im Fall eines preussisch-französischen Krieges wegen der Hohenzollernschen Kandidatur erregt hatten. In Folge dessen hat General von Suckow, wie ich vertraulich höre, die beiden Minister von Scheurlen und Mittnacht ersucht, sich schon jetzt für eine Theilnahme Württembergs bei etwaigem Kriege im Ministerrath auszusprechen, und dadurch jeden spätern Widerstand des Fhrn. von Varnbüler abzuschneiden. Dies ist geschehen, wie mein gestriges Telegramm besagt, und hat Fhr. von Varnbüler keine Gegenbedenken aufgestellt, vielmehr erklärt, dass aus der letzten Eisenbahnanleihe sich die Geldmittel vorschussweise werden entnehmen lassen, um die Armee mobil zu machen.

General von Suckow behauptet nun, dass ausser den genannten Ministern auch der Cultusminister für eine nationale Auffassung gewonnen sei, und dadurch etwaigen Schwenkungen des Ministers von Varnbüler vorgebeugt seien. Frh. v. Varnbüler gestand

[1] The reference is clearly to Bernstorff's telegrams printed above under Nos. 208 and 210.

[2] Abeken's marginal note: *Die beiden eben eingehenden Telegramme aus London dürften wohl nicht mehr von hieraus, sondern erst von Berlin aus zu beantworten sein.*

mir zu, dass die Theilnahme Württembergs an einem Kriege wegen des blossen Festhaltens an der Kandidatur des Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern ihm nicht als eine von vornherein abgemachte Sache erschienen sei, dass die Lage der Dinge sich aber geändert habe, seitdem die Garantieforderung wegen der Kandidatur bekannt geworden ist. Er sagte mir, dass bisher ein officieller Beschluss der Württembergischen Regierung noch nicht gefasst sei; denn dazu sei eine officielle Anfrage Preussens erforderlich, so wie die Zustimmung des Königs, der noch in St. Moritz in der Schweiz weile; es hätten vorläufig nur vertrauliche Besprechungen im Ministerrath stattgefunden, die eine erfreuliche Uebereinstimmung der Ansichten dargethan hätten; er könne mir nur so viel sagen, dass er eine grosse Erregung des Nationalgefühls voraussehe und dass die Regierung demselben Rechnung tragen würde. Einen Widerspruch in den Kammern besorge er nicht. Er habe bereits heute bei Eisenbahnbauten die grösste Sparsamkeit angeordnet, damit die Gelder für eine etwaige Mobilmachung verwendet werden könnten. Er schloss mit dem Wunsche, dass eine vollkommene Offenheit zwischen den Organen Württembergs und Preussens herrsche. . . .

Dank der guten Organisation der hiesigen nationalen Parthei, wird die Stimmung auch im Lande täglich günstiger für die Sache Preussens; nur die Ultramontanen sollen ihrer Partheilichkeit für Frankreich bisher noch nicht in ihren hiesigen Organen entsagt haben. . . .

No. 220

GEHEIMRAT ABEKEN to COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2349 Ems, July 15, 1870

(Time of sending and reception not given.)

Auf Telegramm 29 u. 30 [1] befiehlt Se. Majestät zu sagen, dass Antwort von Berlin erfolgen würde, und nur für Ew. Exc. zu bemerken, dass Er von der spanischen Candidatur-Frage niemals eine Mittheilung an das französische Gouvernement gemacht habe.

[1] See Nos. 208 and 210.

No. 221

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2376 Paris, July 15, 1870

Sent 1 A.M. Rec. 11.18 A.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Graf Waldersee meldet:

Eine Beorderung von Reserve-Armeen und Mobilisirung von Garden hat stattgefunden, in welchem Umfange ist zur Stunde noch nicht zu übersehen.[1]

No. 222

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2377 Paris, July 15, 1870

Sent 1 A.M. Rec. 12.22 P.M. (Duplicate to Ems.)

Der Artikel der Norddeutschen, dass der König sich verweigert hat, den Grafen Benedetti anzunehmen, bringt hier Aufregung hervor. Herzog von Gramont bemerkte mir darüber, dass der Artikel schärfer laute, als das Sachverhältniss nach Berichten des Grafen Benedetti wäre. In meiner heutigen Unterredung sprach sich Herzog von Gramont über Krieg und Frieden evasiv aus, erwähnte ganz beiläufig etwaiges Bestreben fremder Mächte im Sinne des Friedens, und betonte, dass er für die öffentliche Meinung nicht kriegerisch genug gesinnt sei. Heute Abend durchziehen Volkshaufen die Stadt mit Geschrei gegen Preussen, und soeben gegen Mitternacht war ein solcher vor dem Botschafthotel mit Insulten und Gebrüll.

No. 223

BARON VON WERTHERN, Envoy at Munich, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2379 Munich, July 15, 1870

Sent 10.20 A.M. Rec. 12.47 P.M.

Telegramm No. 23 und 24 [2] erhalten.

[1] Bismarck's marginal note: *Ich fahre etwa halb 6 mit Extrazug nach Brandenburg. Bitte um Begleitung oder Mitgabe der Ordre-Entwürfe.*

[2] See No. 211.

Der Kriegsminister sagt, so wie Mobilmachung angeordnet sei, verpflichte er sich, genau nach den Bestimmungen des in Berlin bekannten Mobilmachungs-Plans, die zwei Armee-Corps in Kriegsstärke zu stellen. . . .

Graf Bray, den ich heute früh sah, gab mir ebenfalls in befriedigender Weise die Zusicherung, Bayern werde sich nicht von uns trennen.

No. 224

BARON VON WERTHERN, Envoy at Munich, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2384 Munich, July 15, 1870

Sent 11.50 A.M. Rec. 4.40 P.M.

Der englische Gesandte und österreichische Gesandte haben dem Grafen Bray gesagt, ihre Kabinette beabsichtigten, eine Vermittlung zwischen uns und Frankreich zu versuchen. Graf Bray ist darüber sehr erfreut, mochte aber Eurer Excellenz Ansicht kennen, ehe hier . . . [*sic*] etwas dazu thut.

No. 225

BISMARCK to BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2376 Berlin, July 15, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 1.30 P.M.

Telegramm 68 [1] entziffert, aber Wortbedeutung unklar. Was ist unter Reserve-Armeen und was unter Garden darin verstanden.

No. 226

BISMARCK to the Prussian Envoys at Munich and Stuttgart.

Tg. in claris

(Kz) No. 1248 Berlin, July 15, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 1.30 P.M.

Nach den uns vorliegenden zum grösseren Theil schon in die Oeffentlichkeit übergegangenen Nachrichten dürfen wir nicht mehr zweifeln, dass wir von einem Angriff Frankreichs bedroht sind. Wenn wir auch die Hoffnung noch nicht aufgeben, dass das

[1] See No. 221.

französische Cabinet schliesslich auch seinerseits den von uns nicht in Frage gestellten Frieden werde halten wollen, so würde doch, wenn diese Hoffnung uns zu unserem Bedauern täuschen sollte, bis zum Ausbruch der Feindseligkeiten an der deutschen Grenze nicht mehr die Zeit bleiben, um alsdann die dem Bündniss-Vertrage vom 22. August 1866 (in the despatch to Stuttgart: 13. August 1866) entsprechende gemeinsame Vertheidigung Deutschlands ins Werk zu setzen.

Unter diesen Umständen wollen Ew. Exc. bei der Kgl. Bayerischen (Württembergischen) Regierung anfragen, ob sie geneigt sei, einen Bevollmächtigten Behufs der zur Sicherheit Deutschlands erforderlichen militairischen Verabredungen hierher zu entsenden.

No. 227

BISMARCK to BARON VON CANITZ, Envoy at Madrid. *Tg. Cph.*
(Kt.) No. 13 Berlin, July 15, 1870
Sent to the Tg. Station 1.55 P.M.[1]

Ew. Hochwohlgeboren wollen General Prim mittheilen, dass wir Angesichts der Rüstungen Frankreichs zu waffnen genöthigt sind, und anfragen, welches Verhalten Spaniens wir in einem durch französische Einmischung in die innern Angelegenheiten Spaniens veranlassten deutsch-französischen Kriege zu erwarten haben. Melden Sie, dass das gesammte Deutschland zur Abwehr in lebhaft erregtem Nationalgefühl einig ist, dass ausser vielleicht Dänemark keine europäische Macht auf Seite Frankreichs stehen werde, namentlich Oesterreich und Italien nicht.

No. 228

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF, Ambassador at London, to BISMARCK.
Tg. Cph.
No. A 2391 London, July 15, 1870
Sent 2.13 P.M. Rec. 6.45 P.M.

Telegramm No. 29[2] erhalten. Erwartete den Eindruck meiner gestrigen Mittheilung auf Ew. Excellenz. Ich habe Lord Granville Alles deutlich und stark genug gesagt. Man versichert

[1] Bismarck's autograph draft. [2] See No. 217.

übrigens, dass England in Paris sehr stark drückt, und es steht gewiss in der Sache auf unserer Seite, möchte aber gern jeden Vorwand Frankreichs, auch was die Form betrifft, wegräumen. Dies der Grund der gestrigen —— —— —— [*sic*].

No. 229

BISMARCK to the Prussian Envoys at Munich, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, and Darmstadt. *Tg. Cph.*

(Kz) No. 1254 Berlin, July 15, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 3.10 P.M.

Bei der Dringlichkeit der Umstände und der Möglichkeit eines sehr baldigen Bruches mit Frankreich kann ich nur telegraphisch Ew. Exc. beauftragen, der dortigen Regierung die Hoffnung auszusprechen, dass dieselbe, um im Sinne der Bündnissverträge die Haltung von ganz Deutschland in Einklang zu bringen, ihre Mission in Paris werde anweisen wollen, sobald die norddeutsche Botschaft von dort abgehen sollte, ein gleiches zu thun, und dass ebenmässig die französische Gesandschaft in München (Stuttgart, Carlsruhe, Darmstadt) solchen Falles ihre Pässe erhalte.

No. 230

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2400 Paris, July 15, 1870

Sent 4.50 P.M. Rec. 9 P.M.

Herzog von Gramont erklärt soeben im Senat ungefähr folgendes:

Seine Majestät der König habe die an ihn mit aller Rücksicht gestellten Anträge zurückgewiesen, den Bothschafter nicht mehr empfangen wollen, und dies den auswärtigen Höfen angezeigt. Es wäre eine Unvorsichtigkeit gewesen, da noch länger zu warten; seitdem habe man daher die Reserven einberufen. Grosser Enthusiasmus. Niemand verlangt das Wort. Herr Rouher giebt im Namen des Senats der Regierung ein Vertrauensvotum und schliesst: "es bleibe nur noch das Vertrauen in den Degen Frankreichs."

No. 231

BARON VON WERTHER, Ambassador at Paris, to the FOREIGN OFFICE at Berlin. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2399 Paris, July 15, 1870

Sent 4.50 P.M. Rec. 9 P.M.

Antwort auf Telegramm 32:

Es sind sämmtliche Reserven und vier Jahrgänge Garden mobilisirt —— —— —— [*sic*] einbeordert.

No. 232

BISMARCK to BARON VON WERTHERN, Envoy at Munich. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2384 Berlin, July 15, 1870

Sent to the Tg. Station 6 P.M.

Antwort auf das Telegramm No. 20.[1]

Die Vermittlung ist durch Telegramm dieser Nacht von London aus dahin versucht, dass wir Frankreich die Unwahrheit erklären sollen, der König habe in die Zurücknahme der Kandidatur des Prinzen gewilligt. Ich habe sofort nach London geantwortet, dass wir an Frankreich unter dem Drucke seiner Drohungen garnichts zu erklären vermöchten, dass die Privat-Correspondenz der Könige kein Gegenstand internationaler Verhandlungen sei. Ich füge für Sie hinzu, dass wir Angesichts der von Frankreich provocirten nationalen Erregung den Krieg zu führen genöthigt sind, wenn Frankreich uns nicht Garantien für künftiges Wohlverhalten geben kann.

No. 233

COUNT VON WESDEHLEN, Chargé d'Affaires at Florence, to BISMARCK. *Tg. Cph.*

No. A 2413 Florence, July 15, 1870

Sent 6.15 P.M. Rec. July 16, 12.30 A.M.

No. 6[2] gestern Abend erhalten und Inhalt heute Visconti Venosta mitgetheilt. Die betreffende Nachricht war übrigens schon

[1] See No. 224. [2] See No. 187.

gestern hier bekannt. Der Minister der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten nahm Mittheilung mit gewohnter Zurückhaltung entgegen, beklagte den Ernst der Lage und wiederholte, die italienische Regierung habe nach Entsagung des Erbprinzen die Frage für erledigt angesehen. Er enthielt sich jedes Urtheils über Haltung der betheiligten Mächte. Er sagte mir, England erkläre noch in Paris seine Missbilligung der weiteren französischen Forderung, suche aber in Berlin zugleich Anerkennung zu erlangen, dass die Entsagung mit Zustimmung Preussens erfolgt sei.

Wie Hr. Blanc mir nachher mittheilte, ist von hier aus in London angefragt worden, ob etwa eine Art Garantie-Erklärung der neutralen Mächte, an Stelle der von Preussen verlangten, in Paris angeboten werden könnte. Bestürzung allgemein. Die öffentliche Meinung missbilligt beinahe einstimmig Frankreichs letzte Prätention und verlangt für Italien Erhaltung des Friedens.

No. 234

Telegram of the WOLFF AGENCY

No. A 2378*a* Paris, July 15, 1870

Aujourd'hui une heure communication simultanée sénat législatif exposant situation se terminant par annonce déclaration guerre à la Prusse. Cette déclaration été précipitée par circulaire à agents prussiens à étranger.

1°

Confirmant affront fait par [1] Benedetti.

2°

Refusant renonciation Hohenzollern.

3°

Lui restituant sa liberté accepter couronne.

HAVAS.

[1] Someone has added in the margin: *d?*

No. 235

Telegram of the WOLFF AGENCY

Paris, July 15, 1870

Sent 7.10 P.M. Rec. 10.50 P.M.

Ollivier demande crédit 50 millions pour ministère guerre et levée de classes. Vingtaine membres dont Thiers votent contre urgence. Thiers parle contre guerre mais Chambre écoutent avec impatience. Ollivier répond dit si guerre est nécessaire c'est celle ci à laquelle Prusse nous oblige. Tolérance plus grande nous ferait descendre dernier rang. Ollivier répondant Gambetta fait ressortir conduite insultante Prusse à notre égard. Lebeuf [*sic*] présente decret appelant garde mobile activité. Urgence déclarée unanimitée [*sic*]. Segris demande crédit 16 millions pour ministère Marine.

APPENDIX I

AUSTRIAN AND SPANISH DESPATCHES FROM BERLIN OF JULY, 1870 [1]

No. 236

BARON VON MÜNCH-BELLINGHAUSEN, Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin, to COUNT VON BEUST, Austro-Hungarian Chancellor of the Empire. *Private letter*

Berlin, July 4, 1870

. . . "Wolff's Telegraphen Bureau" veröffentlicht heute eine der Agence Havas entnommenen Depesche, nach welcher die spanische Regierung sich für die Wahl des Prinzen von Hohenzollern zum Könige entschieden habe und bereits eine Deputation an denselben unterwegs sei.

Der hiesige spanische Gesandte glaubt nicht, dass diese Nachricht begründet ist, wie Herr Olozaga ihm noch gestern Abend in einem Telegramme als seiner Ansicht nach falsch bezeichnet habe. Herr Rascon glaubt, dass in diesem Falle der Erbprinz von Hohenzollern gemeint ist, der wegen seiner Heirath mit einer portugiesischen Prinzessin vor seinem jüngeren Bruder in Betracht komme, und was jenen betreffe, so habe er — als während dessen Anwesenheit im letzten Frühling schon die Rede davon gewesen sei — sich damals überzeugt, dass der Prinz kein Anerbieten wegen des erledigten Thrones erhalten hätte. Durch seine — des Gesandten — Vermittlung habe auch seit dieser Zeit keinerlei Verhandlung mit einem Hohenzollernschen Prinzen stattgehabt, und er halte es nicht für wahrscheinlich, dass ein solcher der Kandidat des Generals Prim sei, weil Letzterer einen zu grossen Werth auf ein gutes, ja inniges Einvernehmen mit dem Kaiser Napoleon lege, das durch einen solchen Schritt gestört werden müsste. . . . (Briefly alludes to Le Sourd's interpellation of Thile.)

[1] From the Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, III, 102, *Prusse, Rapports*, 1870; and the Archivo del Ministerio de Estado, Madrid, 60, *Política, Candidaturas al Trono de España*, 1870, *Hohenzollern*, 1a, 64, 59.

No. 237

RASCON, Spanish Envoy at Berlin, to SAGASTA, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs. *Tg. Cph.*
Berlin, July 8, 1870

Es probable Emp. de Franceses proponga reunir conferencia segun se hizo con Grecia, como si España pudiera consentir tan indigna comparacion y tolerar que nadie disponga de su suerte. Bismarck no cederá en nada.

No. 238

BARON VON MÜNCH-BELLINGHAUSEN to COUNT VON BEUST. *Tg. Cph.*
No. 5310 Berlin, July 9, 1870
6011
Sent 5.46 P.M. Rec. 8.15 P.M.

Lord Granville a écrit lettre particulière pour exprimer en son nom et celui de Monsieur Gladstone surprise de la candidature Prince Hohenzollern et l'espoir que le Roi de Prusse refuse son autorisation. Lord Loftus a lu cette lettre aujourd'hui à Mr. de Thile, non pas comme communication officielle mais confidentielle.

L'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre a suggéré hier l'idée à son gouvernement que la Prusse et la France prennent engagement à la demande des autres Puissances de se tenir tranquilles jusqu'après l'élection et que Prince Hohenzollern s'engage d'avance à refuser couronne pour motif d'une faible majorité. M. de Thile a applaudi à cette idée, qu'il transmet à Ems et Varzin. M. Benedetti doit aller à Ems. M. de Thile continue à dire que l'affaire ne regarde pas le Gouvernement Prussien et n'entre pas dans des discussions. Il a laissé l'impression à Lord Loftus qu'il se croit en cela l'interprète de M. le Comte Bismarck, qu'il est persuadé que la France veut la guerre.

No. 239

RASCON to SAGASTA. *Tg. Cph.*
Berlin, July 9, 1870

Embajador ingles pretende Rey de España [*sic:* must mean Prussia] niegue consentimiento y ruega á varios colegas influyan

con Principe para que no admita. El Cde. Bismark dará una respuesta evasiva para ganar tiempo y hacer la eleccion.

No. 240

RASCON to SAGASTA. *Tg. Cph.*
Sent 12 M. Berlin, July 10, 1870

Hoy recibe Bismarck noticias de grandes y presurosos preparativos militares en Francia.

No. 241

RASCON to SAGASTA. *Tg. Cph.*
Sent 2.15 P.M. Berlin, July 12, 1870

Probablemente dirijirá mañana á V. E. el conde de Bismark esta pregunta: ¿caso de guerra entre Francia y Prusia sin hostilizar á España, que hará el Gobierno español? Me la hace confidencialmente el Secretario de Estado.

No. 242

BARON VON MÜNCH-BELLINGHAUSEN to COUNT VON BEUST. *Tg. Cph.*
No. 7199 Berlin, July 12, 1870
3721
Sent 2.20 P.M. Rec. 5.30 P.M.

Herr v. Thile sagte mir soeben, dass Graf Bismarck heute hier eintrifft, hier speist und dann nach Ems weiter reiset. . . . Herr v. Thile erklärt sehr wenig Hoffnung auf Erhaltung des Friedens zu haben.

No. 243

BARON VON MÜNCH-BELLINGHAUSEN to COUNT VON BEUST. *Tg. Cph.*
No. 6309 Berlin, July 11, 1870
771
Sent 2.40 P.M. Rec. 3.25 P.M.

Herr von Thile empfängt wegen Ministerrath heute nicht, doch sah er würtembergischen Gesandten und sagte ihm: Er habe positive Nachrichten über französische Truppenbewegungen; er glaube, dass wir in acht Tagen Krieg haben werden, er habe süddeutsche Regierungen bereits verständigt.

No. 244

BARON VON MÜNCH-BELLINGHAUSEN to COUNT VON BEUST. *Tg. Cph.*
No. 7487 Berlin, July 13, 1870
5841
Sent 12.10 A.M. Rec. 3.50 A.M.

Comte Bismark a dit au Ministre d'Italie qu'à la suite de la renonciation du Prince Hohenzollern tout était arrangé et qu'il repartirait demain pour Varzin.

No. 245

BARON VON MÜNCH-BELLINGHAUSEN to COUNT VON BEUST.

Private letter
BERLIN, July 13, 1870

Nachdem gestern, in Folge der Nachricht des Eintreffens des Grafen Bismarck und des Gerüchtes, dass der König seine Badekur plötzlich abbrechen und hierher zurückkommen werde, die Lage dahier auf das Schärfste aufgefasst worden war, wurden in den Abendstunden fast gleichzeitig mit der Nachricht von der Entsagung des Prinzen von Hohenzollern auch die sehr beruhigenden Aeusserungen des Gf. Bismarck über die Situation bekannt.

Aus den Letzteren schliesst man darauf, dass das französische Cabinet bereits vorher erklärt hätte, sich zufrieden geben zu wollen, wenn diese Entsagung eintrete, und man hofft demgemäss, dass auch die bevorstehende Erklärung des Duc de Gramont in dem Corps législatif so gehalten sein werde, dass sie der Würde Preussens nicht zu nahe trete. Gleichzeitig verhehlt man sich aber nicht, dass auch in dem günstigen Falle der Beseitigung der Kriegsgefahr die Situation eine ganz andere, wie vor der Thronkandidatur, geworden ist, dass die Beziehungen der beiden Nachbarvölker auf lange Zeit hinaus die gespanntesten sein werden und grosse Gefahren in sich schliessen müssen. Ebenso wie mit der Erregung der Geister in Frankreich noch zu rechnen ist, muss man sich hier auf ein gewisses Unbehagen über den Gedanken gefasst machen, die Franzosen könnten durch die Lösung dieses Streites sich zu einer das preussische Ehrgefühl

verletzenden Auffassung berechtigt halten. Wie viel Geschicklichkeit und Geduld der beiderseitigen Staatsmänner wird es bedürfen um dem Wiederauftreten ähnlicher Zwischenfälle vorzubeugen!

Diese und manche anderen mit der neuen Phase der Sache unzertrennbaren Reflexionen verhindern noch, dass das Bewusstsein einer überstandenen Gefahr sich recht geltend mache und das Gefühl der Unsicherheit hier vor dem Eintreffen neuerer Nachrichten aus Paris verschwinde.

No. 246

RASCON to SAGASTA. *Sent by courier.*
No. 100 Berlin, July 13

[On receiving the Minister's telegram[1] he had gone to the North German Foreign Office, and in Bismarck's temporary absence had been received by Thile, who told him]:

El Conde de Bismarck fué sorprendido anoche por un despacho del Embajador de Prusia en Paris, el cual le participaba que habiendo ido á ver al Duque de Gramont encontró en el Ministerio al Señor Olózaga y le manifestó este que el Principe Leopoldo habia retirado su consentimiento. El Conde de Bismarck acaba de llegar de Varzin proponiendose continuar hoy á Ems, y ha suspendido su viage hasta tener un conocimiento exacto de lo ocurrido.

Habiendo leido al Sr. de Thile el despacho de V. E., me manifestó que trasmitiria su contenido al Conde de Bismarck así como volviese y que si tenia algo que comunicarme me lo avisaria inmediatamente.

La opinion de casi todos los hombres importantes de esta es que la guerra entre Francia y Prusia es ya inevitable apesar de la renuncia del Principe.

[1] At 12.30 A.M., July 13, Sagasta had telegraphed to Rascon: El General Prim ha recibido un telegrama de Sigmaringen suscrito por el principe Hohenzollern retirando la candidatura en nombre de su hijo Leopoldo. Dudamos de su autenticidad. Informese bien V. E. y conteste lo antes posible. . . .

A second telegram to Berlin and a similar one to Paris (July 13) express the same doubts.

No. 247

RASCON to SAGASTA. *Tg. Cph.*
Sent 3.10 P.M. Berlin, July 13, 1870

Bismark fué sorprendido anoche por despacho de embajador Prusiano que anunciaba haber recibido la noticia de la embajada española en Paris. Nada sabe todavia directamente.

Guerra parece aquí inevitable.

No. 248

BARON VON MÜNCH-BELLINGHAUSEN to COUNT VON BEUST. *Tg. Cph.*
No. 7824 Berlin, July 13, 1870
8661
Sent 4.30 P.M. Rec. 6.45 P.M.

Graf Bismark äusserte sich gegen einen Vertrauensmann wie gegen italienischen Gesandten, doch sagte er, die Sache sei "momentan arrangirt." Rückkehr nach Varzin auf heute Abends oder morgen früh bestimmt. Herr v. Thile drückt auch heute noch seine persönliche Meinung dahin aus, dass Frankreich Krieg wolle; er drückt seine Zufriedenheit mit Haltung der süddeutschen Regierungen, namentlich Baierns und Badens, aus.

No. 249

RASCON to SAGASTA. *Tg. Cph.*
Sent 10.40 P.M. Berlin, July 13, 1870

Recibo Bismark detalles de la renuncia que envio por correo. Presentando embajador Francés hoy nueva exigencia, Rey de Prusia le ha hecho gran desaire.

No. 250

BARON VON MÜNCH-BELLINGHAUSEN to COUNT VON BEUST. *Tg. Cph.*
Sent 12.30 A.M. Berlin, July 14, 1870

Ein Extrablatt der Norddeutschen Allgemeinen Zeitung von 9 Uhr Abends sagt: Der französische Botschafter hat in Ems die Forderung gestellt . . . [the remainder of the contents of the 'Ems Telegram' as published].

No. 251

RASCON to SAGASTA. *Sent by courier.*
No. 101 Berlin, July 14, 1870

Segun indicaba á V. E. en mi despacho de ayer No. 100, ví por la noche al Conde de Bismarck y me dijo que poco despues de mi entrevista con el Sr. de Thile habia recibido pormenores sobre la renuncia del Principe de Hohenzollern.

La ha hecho este cediendo á las instancias de los Gobiernos neutros y muy particularmente del Gabinete britanico, y la ha fundado en una razon de decoro y dignidad. Como militar prusiano no podia aceptar el trono de España é irse á sentar pacificamente en él mientras que la Prusia tenia que sostener una guerra por su causa, y si nuestra nacion se decidia á secundarla iba á imponerle, al empezar su reinado, un sacrificio costosisimo, que repugna á sus sentimientos.

El Conde de Bismarck me añadió que lejos de considerar terminada la cuestion veia la guerra inevitable, porque el Gobierno frances, no contento con el sacrificio que ha hecho el Principe, presentaba nuevas exigencias ofensivas é irritantes, y me refirió la escena ocurrida ayer entre el Rey de Prusia y el Embajador de Francia, diciendome que la transmitia al Baron de Canitz para que lo pusiera en conocimiento de V. E.

Apesar de las publicas amenazas de los Ministros, de los Diputados y de los periodicos franceses y de los anuncios de una guerra inminente, esta poblacion y todas las de la Confederacion de la Alemania del Norte habian permanecido tranquilas sin observarse el menor sintoma de efervescencia, hasta las altas horas de la noche de ayer en que empezaron á circular en el vulgo las ultimas pretensiones del Emperador de los Franceses y los terminos desusados en que las habia expresado el Conde de Benedetti. Esta noticia y la de que el Rey volvia de Ems conmovieron instantaneamente la poblacion y con el objeto de victorear á S. M. se llenaron de gentes del pueblo las principales calles de Berlin, no retirandose los grupos numerosos hasta que adquirieron la certitud de que el Rey no se habia movido de Ems.

El consejo de la Confederacion de la Alemania del Norte está convocado para pasado mañana y el consejo de Ministros se reunirá mañana en Potsdam ó aquí bajo la presidencia del Rey, resolviendo probablemente la movilizacion del ejercito.

No. 252

RASCON to SAGASTA. *Tg. Cph.*
Sent 1.20 P.M. Berlin, July 14, 1870

Bismark dice que renuncia es cierta. La funda el Principe en que siendo militar prusiano no podria abstenerse de tomar parte en una guerra hecha por su causa y si comprometiera á España en ella haria muy doloroso el principio de su reinado. Embajador francés retirado.

No. 253

BARON VON MÜNCH-BELLINGHAUSEN to COUNT VON BEUST.
Private letter
Berlin, July 14, 1870

Wenn gleich neben dem Vorgange in Ems der die schwebende Frage zur Entscheidung brachte, das was gestern hier vorging an Bedeutung sehr zurücksteht, so glaube ich doch die Eindrücke des gestrigen Tages, in der objektiven Weise die ich in meiner Berichterstattung einzuhalten bemüht bin, noch kurz skizziren zu sollen.

Die Nachricht von der Entsagung des Prinzen von Hohenzollern und die über die Mission des Grafen Benedetti in Umlauf gebrachten Notizen haben das preussische Ehrgefühl verletzt, und jede weitere Nachgiebigkeit gegen die französischen Forderungen wäre als eine Demüthigung angesehen worden. Telegramme aus den grösseren Provinzialstädten berichteten, dass dieses Gefühl allgemein sei. Dasselbe soll auch namentlich von dem Kronprinzen, der gestern eine Unterredung mit dem Bundeskanzler hatte, und den Ministern getheilt werden. In diesen Kreisen fühlt man sich namentlich dadurch gekränkt, dass der König in eine ganz anormale Position durch die Mission Benedetti gebracht worden wäre, und scheint zu finden, dass Seine Majestät den französischen Botschafter zu freundlich behandelt und den

französischen Forderungen zu willfähig Gehör geschenkt habe. Die Details die über den gestrigen Vorgang in Ems hier bekannt worden, haben dazu beigetragen, die Missstimmung und Gereiztheit noch zu erhöhen. Man tadelt, dass der französische Botschafter die dem Könige schuldige Rücksicht bei Seite gesetzt hat, indem er Seine Majestät auf der Promenade anredete um die Garantieforderung zu stellen.

Angesichts dieser Stimmung würde jeder Vermittlungsversuch voraussichtlich erfolglos sein und hier wohl eher als eine Kränkung aufgefasst werden, und Graf de Launay hat bereits seiner Regierung die Nutzlosigkeit jeder weiteren Bemühung im Interesse des Friedens vorgestellt. Lord Augustus Loftus, der gestern den Bundeskanzler sah — noch ehe der Vorfall zwischen dem Könige und dem Grafen Benedetti sich ereignet hatte — fand denselben sehr entschieden in der Ansicht, dass jede weitere Forderung Frankreichs zum Kriege führen müsste.

Aus der Stimmung die sich der hiesigen Einwohner bereits bemächtigt hat, lässt sich schliessen, dass der Krieg mit Frankreich hier populär werden wird; eine grosse Siegeszuversicht spricht sich schon jetzt allenthalben aus.

Thatsächlich Neues wüsste ich nur wenig hinzuzufügen, da die militärischen Massregeln erst Morgen nach Ankunft des Königs veröffentlicht werden sollen, ebenso wie das Dekret, das den Reichstag auf einen der ersten Tage der kommenden Woche zusammenberuft. . . .

No. 254

BARON VON MÜNCH-BELLINGHAUSEN to COUNT VON BEUST.

No. 80 Berlin, July 16, 1870

. . . Die Nachricht der französischen Kriegserklärung kam durch das Bureau Havas erst um 7 Uhr hier an, und wurde dem Könige und dem Gf. Bismarck bei deren Ankunft um 9½ Uhr am Eisenbahnhof vom Hr. v. Thile mitgetheilt.

APPENDIX II

No. 255

BARON VON WERTHERN, Envoy at Munich, to BISMARCK.[1]

No. A 3242 Munich, July 25, 1870

Rec. July 27.

Die Depesche des Herzogs von Grammont vom 21. d. M. (abgedruckt in der Indépendance Belge No. 204 vom 23sten d.) zwingt mich, Euerer Excellenz folgendes mitzutheilen.

Der erste Gedanke der spanischen Throncandidatur des Erbprinzen von Hohenzollern gehört mir. Auf einem Diner bei Mrs. O'Shea in Biarritz, wenn ich nicht irre Anfangs November 1866, an dem mehrere Spanier von der Union liberal Theil nahmen, wurde der Sturz der Bourbonen und die Wahl eines neuen Königs besprochen. Zuletzt sagte ich: Keiner der Prinzen, welche genannt worden seien (und deren Candidaturen sich seitdem als aussichtslos erwiesen haben) passte; auf den einzigen, welcher geeignet sei, werden sie gar nicht, oder ganz zuletzt verfallen, nemlich einen Prinzen der Catholischen Linie der Hohenzollern.

Auf meiner Durchreise durch Düsseldorf am 12ten Januar 1867, erwähnte ich conversationsweise dieses Gedankens gegen S. K. H. den Fürsten von Hohenzollern, Höchstwelcher die Gnade hatte mich zu empfangen, und um dieselbe Zeit, kurz vor meiner Abberufung von Madrid, benutzte ich ihn in einem allerunterthänigsten Immediatberichte an Se. M. den König und in einem Berichte an Euere Excellenz als Argument für die Zweckmässigkeit der Verleihung des Schwarzen Adler Ordens an den Marschall Narvaez.

Am 14. September 1869 besuchte mich hier Herr Salazar y Mazaredo und sagte mir folgendes: Er habe jenem diner in Biarritz mit beigewohnt, meine Aeusserung bezüglich des Prinzen von Hohenzollern aber Anfangs nicht beachtet. Erst vor Kurzem sei ihm die Bedeutung derselben aufgefallen. In Folge des-

[1] From the Berlin Archives.

sen sei er von Madrid nach Vichy gereist, um den Marschall Prim für diesen Gedanken zu gewinnen. Prim schliesste sich demselben an und habe ihn beauftragt, sich sofort zu mir zu begeben und mir in seinem Namen der Bitte auszusprechen, ihn, Mazaredo, mit Sr. K. H. dem Fürsten von Hohenzollern in Verbindung zu bringen.

Diesen Wunsch habe ich damals erfüllt, die fernere Aufforderung des Herrn Salazar y Mazaredo, Seine Majestät den König und Euere Excellenz persönlich und direct für die Candidatur eines Prinzen von Hohenzollern zu interessiren, aber mit dem Bemerken zurückgewiesen, dass dies meine Befugniss überschreiten werde und nur von Sr. K. H. dem Fürsten von Hohenzollern, oder dem Marschall Prim, ausgehen könne.

Hieraus geht hervor, dass die Hohenzollern'sche Candidatur von Marschall Prim selbst erst in der ersten Hälfte September 1869, während seines Aufenthaltes in Vichy, in Betracht gezogen worden ist und folglich, dass dieselbe nicht schon im Monat März v. J. Gegenstand der Besprechung des Grafen Benedetti gewesen sein kann, wie die Depesche vom 21. d. M. behauptet.

APPENDIX III

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MARSHAL PRIM AND THE PRINCES OF HOHENZOLLERN-SIGMARINGEN [1]

No. 256

PRIM to PRINCE LEOPOLD OF HOHENZOLLERN.

Madrid, February 17, 1870

SEÑOR, —

Autorizado por el Consejo de Ministros de S. A. el Regente del Reino, tengo la honra de dirigir esta carta á V. A. R. por medio del Señor de Salazar y Mazarredo, Diputado á Cortes, Consejero de Estado, persona de toda mi confianza, y que ha tenido ya ocasion de hablar de los asuntos de España con V. A. y con su familia.

Me valgo de este conducto confidencial, porque siendo V. A. mayor de edad y dueño de sus acciones, no tienen que intervenir en su resolucion definitiva los ministros de Negocios estranjeros de España y Prusia.

La Europa no podrá desconocer jamás la lealtad de nuestras intenciones, pero para la conveniencia de la más estremada reserva, hay que tomar en consideracion los designios hostiles de las parcialidades politicas, interesadas en que se malogre cualquier combinacion dinástica que ponga termino á sus esperanzas.

España desea vivir bajo un gobierno monarquico, pero liberal, y en todos los sacudimientos de que ha sido teatro desde 1808, ha tendido siempre á fundar un orden de cosas que permita el desenvolvimiento de sus grandes recursos, al abrigo de las instituciones modernas.

La casa de Borbon no ha sabido comprender la grandeza de tan noble empresa; y si hay en nuestra larga historia un hecho digno de la meditacion de los hombres pensadores, es el ejemplo de una dinastia que no ha omitido nada en su ceguedad, para enagenarse el afecto de unos de los pueblos mas generosos de la tierra.

[1] From the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerio de Estado), Madrid. 60. *Política, Candidaturas al Trono de España*, 1870, *Hohenzollern*, 1a, 64, 59 and 60.

Las Cortes Constituyentes han votado el año ultimo una Constitucion que ha sido aceptada por los dos grandes partidos, conservador y radical; y los proyectos de leyes orgánicas redactados por comisiones compuestas de individuos de ambas procedencias, son un nuevo testimonio de los sentimientos patrioticos que animan á los legítimos representantes del pueblo español.

Nuestra obra debe ser coronada por la eleccion de un rey, sinceramente constitucional, que represente la tradicion en lo que encierra de respetable, y el progreso, en cuanto tenga digno de ser tomado en cuenta. El partido conservador, que se opuso al Duque de Génova porque era menor de edad, votará segun lo que ha declarado publicamente, en favor de un principe, mayor de edad y católico, que merece ser por su posicion y condiciones personales el elegido de la nacion.

V. A. R. reune todas las calidades deseadas, y tengo la honra de pediros en nombre del Consejo de Ministros, os sirvais dar una respuesta favorable á las proposiciones que el Sr. de Salazar y Mazarredo hará á V. A. de una manera confidencial. El Sr. de Salazar está perfectamente instruido de los proyectos y de los sentimientos del gobierno de S. A., y os ruego otorgueis entero credito á todo cuanto diga en el desempeño de su mision.

Una era de gloria se inaugurará para V. A. R. No debo ocultaros que habrá que vencer algunas dificultades, pero un principe de vuestra raza dominará facilmente todos los obstaculos, cuando esté seguro del cariño y del apoyo de un pueblo ilustrado por tantos siglos de grandeza, de lealtad y de abnegacion.

Aprovecho esta oportunidad de ofreceros, Señor, las seguridades del profundo respeto, etc. . . .

No. 257

PRINCE LEOPOLD to PRIM.[1] Sigmaringen, June 23, 1870

SEÑOR MARISCAL, —

V. E. sabe ya que un detenido exámen de la situacion en general y obstáculos de un orden privado bastante importantes para ser

[1] What follows here is the official Spanish translation of the original French text, which has been published by Zingeler, *Karl Anton Fürst von Hohenzollern*, pp. 247, 248.

tomados en consideracion, me han impedido contestar antes á la carta que se sirvió V. E. dirigirme, autorizado por el Gobierno de S. A. el Regente del Reino, por conducto del Señor Salazar y Mazarredo, con fecha 17 de febrero ultimo.

Despues de maduras reflexiones puedo anunciar á V. E. hoy que aceptaré la corona de España, si el voto de las Cortes constituyentes, representacion legítima del país, demostrase que mi eleccion podria, mejor que cualquiera otra solucion dinástica, terminar un estado de cosas provisional, cuya prolongacion podria ser incompatible con los supremos intereses de España.

Yo aceptaría con orgullo una confianza tan generosa, esperando que Dios ayudaria mis esfuerzos sinceros para dar á vuestra patria, bajo las garantias de los principios proclamados en la Constitucion de 1869, las condiciones de un progreso constante y pacífico.

Me esforzaria tambien en conservar y aun mejorar, si fuera posible, las buenas relaciones con las potencias extranjeras, con el fin de acelerar el desarrollo de los grandes recursos de España en todos los ramos de la actividad humana.

No podria esplicar por escrito todos los detalles relativos á esta cuestion; pero como el Señor Salazar y Mazarredo que ha seguido estas negociaciones desde el principio, conoce mis intenciones y los sentimientos que me animan, podrá transmitirlos á V. E. y al Gobierno de S. A.

Ruego á V. E., Señor Marqués, suplique á S. A. el Regente se digne aceptar la seguridad de mi mas alta consideracion, dandole conocimiento de esta carta, así como al Consejo de Ministros.

No puedo terminarla sin espresar á V. E. mi profundo reconocimiento por la actitud llena de abnegacion que ha conservado V. E. durante una larga negociacion, cuyo caracter confidencial le imponia una gran reserva.

Aprovecho esta ocasion, etc. . . .

No. 258

PRIM to PRINCE LEOPOLD. Madrid, July 6 (?), 1870[1]

MONSEÑOR, —

La carta de V. A. de 23 de Junio que me ha sido entregada por el Señor Salazar y Mazarredo, me ha traido la grata nueva de que V. A. acepta la candidatura del trono de España que debidamente autorizado tuve el honor de proponer á V. A.

Comprendo perfectamente que la gravedad de las cuestiones políticas y privadas que ha debido pesar V. A. haya retardado la resolucion de V. A., y por lo mismo no puedo menos de manifestarle la gratitud que la deferencia de V. A. me inspira, pues aúnque la impaciencia me hacia considerar largo el plazo, una vez calmada esta, encuentro motivo para mostrarme reconocido.

El Regente del Reino, á quien he dado conocimiento de la carta de V. A., así como el Consejo de Ministros, han mirado la resolucion de V. A., no solo como el medio mejor de terminar la situacion actual de España dando fin á una interinidad peligrosa, sino como la prenda mas segura de que V. A. sabrá llevar á cabo los propósitos que abriga al aceptar la corona de España y hacer con ellos la felicidad de este generoso pueblo.

Á consecuencia de la carta de V. A. el Consejo de Ministros, de acuerdo con S. A. el Regente, ha decidido convocar las Cortes para el dia 20 del actual, á fin de proponer á la Asamblea la candidatura de V. A. Con arreglo á la ley de eleccion de Monarca, esta ha de anunciarse al menos con ocho dias de anticipacion, de modo que el voto de la Cámara tendria lugar en los ultimos dias del mes actual. Verificada la eleccion, una comision elegida por la misma Cámara irá con arreglo á la ley á poner en conocimiento de V. A. la decision de la voluntad nacional y á pedir á V. A. señale la época en que habrá de venir á España á prestar el juramento de la Constitucion y á ocupar el poder supremo.

Al ponerlo así en conocimiento de V. A., tengo el encargo especial de S. A. el Regente del Reino de hacer presente á V. A. la expresion de su alta y respetuosa consideracion, así como de la

[1] The Madrid Archives contain only an undated copy of this important letter; but from internal evidence the date can be fixed at July 6 (or possibly the 7th).

viva satisfaccion que esperimenta al saber que V. A. está dispuesto á unir su suerte á la de la nacion Española.

Restame por ultimo manifestar á V. A. que al ser conocida en esta capital la resolucion de V. A. y las intenciones del Gobierno, se ha manifestado en todas las clases sociales, no solo un sentimiento de respetuosa deferencia, sino tambien de viva simpatia hacia la persona de V. A., deferencia y simpatia que habiendo de aumentarse con el auxilio de la Providencia, seria el lazo de duradera y fecunda union entre los pueblos y sus monarcos.

Escrita ya esta carta y resuelta la actitud del Gobierno en los terminos que he tenido el honor de manifestar á V. A., la interpelacion hecha en el Cuerpo Legislativo y las palabras del Gobierno francés han venido á dar á la aceptacion de V. A. proporciones y carácter que están muy lejos de tener. El Gobierno espera que la impresion del pueblo francés, motivada sin duda por el desconocimiento de la realidad de los hechos, cambiará cuando sean conocidas las negociaciones que han precedido y motivado la aceptacion de V. A. Y cuando la Europa conozca que la iniciativa pertenece al Gobierno español, que V. A. solo ha tenido en cuenta los intereses y la situacion de la España, que lo mismo la política que los intereses de la Prusia han permanecido estraños á la conducta del Gobierno Español como á la decision de V. A., la opinion pública hará desaparecer todas las prevenciones y las susceptibilidades internacionales y ayudará á un país que busca su constitucion definitiva. Confiado en esta justicia que habrá de hacerse á V. A. y al Gobierno Español, este seguirá sin vacilar la marcha que se ha tratado y que he tenido el honor de indicar á V. A.

El Contra-almirante Dⁿ José Polo de Bernabé tendrá el honor de poner esta carta en manos de V. A. y de darle las esplicaciones que V. A. desee tener acerca del estado del pais. Con este motivo tengo el honor de repetir, etc. . . .

No. 259

PRINCE KARL ANTON to PRIM. *Tg.*[1]

Sigmaringen, July 12, 1870

Sent 10.35 A.M. Rec. 6.55 P.M.

MARÉCHAL PRIM. Vu les complications que paraît rencontrer la candidature de mon fils Léopold au trône d'Espagne et la situation pénible que les derniers évènements ont créé au peuple Espagnol en le mettant dans une alternative où il ne saurait prendre conseil que du sentiment de son indépendance, convaincu qu'en pareilles circonstances son suffrage ne saurait avoir la sincérité et la spontanéité sur lesquelles mon fils a compté en acceptant la candidature, je la retire en son nom.

PRINCE DE HOHENZOLLERN

No. 260

PRIM to PRINCE KARL ANTON. *Tg.*[2]

Madrid, July 14, 1870

J'ai l'honneur de répondre à la dépêche de V. A. qui retire la candidature au trône d'Espagne de son fils le Prince Léopold. Le gouvernement estime haultement [*sic*] les phrases que V. A. dirige au noble caractère du peuple espagnol, respecte les importantes et puissantes raisons qui ont engagé V. A. à prendre une telle décision, il lui donne acte de ce retrait, et s'y conformant il l'accepte comme un fait accompli.

No. 261

PRINCE LEOPOLD to PRIM. Sigmaringen, July 15, 1870

MONSIEUR LE MARÉCHAL, —

Je ne puis laisser partir le Contre-Amiral Don José Polo de Barnabé, que Votre Excellence a bien voulu charger de me remet-

[1] This telegram has already been frequently printed, but as there have been minor variations in the published texts and as the time of the sending and reception of the despatch has hitherto not been definitely known, it has seemed worth while to reprint the text as found in the Madrid archives.

[2] This telegram has hitherto been known only through the truncated text published in the *Correspondance de Berlin*, Nov. 14, 1870, and reprinted by Fester, *BA*, No. 544.

tre la réponse à ma lettre du 23 Juin, sans le prier d'être le porteur de ces quelques lignes de vive reconnaissance pour les paroles flatteuses qu'elle contient.

Personne en effet ne pouvait prévoir les complications que ma candidature a soulevées. Vous savez qu'aucune ambition personnelle m'a guidé en acceptant la proposition du Gouvernement Espagnol — j'ai longtemps hésité à me décider, mais enfin j'ai accepté avec toute la franchise de mon cœur.

Vous apprécierez ma renonciation qui a pour but d'éviter, s'il est possible, l'effusion de sang et les conséquences d'une guerre dont les dimensions ne sont pas à mesurer.

Je conserverai toujours le souvenir de ces négociations qui m'ont mis en rapport avec V. A. et qui resteront mémorables pour notre famille, et je n'oublierai jamais la délicatesse exquise et la réserve avec lesquelles vous avez traité cette question difficile.

Veuillez être, etc. . . .

APPENDIX IV

No. 262

MEMORANDUM OF KING WILLIAM[1]
"DER 13te JULY IN EMS"[2]

Als ich meine Brunnen-Promenade wie gewöhnlich von 8–10 Uhr machte, brachte mir OLt. Prinz Radziwill ein Telegramm aus Paris, welches ihm Gf. Benedetti soeben einhändigen liess, mit der Nachricht aus Madrid, dass der Fürst v. Hohenzollern der Spanischen Regierung seines Sohnes Rücktritt von der Annahme der spanische Krone officiell angezeigt habe. Da ich diese Nachricht noch nicht selbst erhalten hatte, liess ich dem Gf. Benedetti dies sagen und für die Mittheilung sehr danken, da sie von so hoher Wichtigkeit sei. Als ich nach Vollendung der Promenade zu Haus gehen wollte, begegnete mir Gf. B. nahe dem Directions Gebäude; ich ging auf ihn zu, und die Hand ihm reichend sagte ich: Je suis charmé de Vous rencontrer pour pouvoir Vous remercier verbalement pour la communication importante que Vous venez de me faire; Vous voyez que Vous êtes mieux et plutôt informé dans ce moment que moi même, car je n'ai point encore reçu cette bonne nouvelle directement. Je n'ai reçu qu'un télégramme particulier qui dit, qu'il paraît que le Prince Léopold renonce à la couronne. Voilà donc l'affaire terminée qui avait pu nous brouiller d'après la manière dont on l'a envisagée chez Vous.

Benedetti. Certainement, Sire, c'est une très bonne nouvelle et nous ne pouvons que nous féliciter de la résolution que le Prince Hohenzollern vient de prendre. Mais comme ce n'est que le Prince père du Prince héréditaire qui au nom du dernier a fait la communication du Prince son fils, il faut encore attendre que ce dernier confirme sa renonciation.

[1] Printed by Herman Granier in the *Festschrift der Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften zu ihrem zehnjährigen Jubiläum* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 273–275.

[2] This memorandum was probably drawn up by the King on the evening of July 13 or on the 14th.

Ich entgegnete ihm, dass mir diese letzte Forderung verletzend für den Fürst Hohenzollern erscheine, da er doch ganz entschieden mit Vorwissen und in Uebereinstimmung mit seinem Sohne nur eine so wichtige Entscheidung officiell habe geben können. Uebrigens fehlten mir noch alle directen officiellen Mittheilungen vom Fürsten, die ich wahrscheinlich im Laufe des Tages erhalten werde und ihm mittheilen würde.

B. Mais on pourrait bien suppléer au manque de la déclaration du Pr. Leopold, si Votre Majesté voulait nous communiquer, qu'Elle s'engageait à ne jamais permettre que le Pr. Leopold revient à accepter la couronne dans le cas qu'on la lui proposait de nouveau.

Ich (meine Ueberraschung über ein solches Ansinnen nicht verbergend, antwortete). Vous me demandez là une déclaration que je suis dans l'impossibilité de faire. Dans des circonstances aussi graves on ne peut jamais se lier les mains d'avance; des questions pareilles se représentent toujours sous d'autres formes, conjectures, etc., qu'il faut les étudier de nouveau et à fond, avant de prendre des résolutions aussi importantes. D'ailleurs je suis persuadé que le Pr. L. ne songera pas une seconde fois à s'embarquer dans une pareille entreprise, voyant quelles complications politiques elle fait naître.

B. Certes. Il n'est pas probable qu'après l'expérience faite, le Prince songe à revenir sur la question qu'il paraît avoir abandonnée; mais nous n'en avons pas la certitude; si V. M. nous fait la déclaration que je viens de Lui soumettre, la question est vidée de suite et à tout jamais.

Ich muss wiederholen, dass ich eine solche händebindende Erklärung unmöglich geben könne, et personne ne le ferait à ma place. Posons un exemple: Vous comme chef de famille Vous aviez donné Votre consentement au mariage de quelqu'un de Votre famille; après quelque temps les fiancés désirent rompre leurs engagements; un troisième, contraire à ce mariage Vous engage à lui donner Votre parole, à ne plus donner Votre consentement en cas que les jeunes gens après de mûres réflexions désirent, de conviction que leur bonheur en dépend, de renouer leurs engagements; dans quelle position Vous trouveriez Vous alors

vis-à-vis du troisième, si Vous même Vous étiez convaincu, que le bonheur de Votre parent dépend de cette union?

B. Ah! ce ne serait qu'une affaire particulière; ce n'est pas aussi grave qu'une question de la haute politique, qui est sur le point de nous attirer les complications les plus funestes.

Ich. Mais qui nous en repond qu'en quelque temps l'Emp. Napoléon lui même trouve que le Prince de Hzl. est le meilleur candidat pour le trône de l'Espagne; que devrais-je faire dans ce cas, si j'avais pris envers lui les engagements formels que Vous me demandez?

B. Mais cela n'arrivera jamais; l'opinion publique est trop contre cette candidature, pour que l'Emp. pourrait jamais songer à la voir renaître; l'agitation à Paris et dans mon pays augmente d'heure en heure et tout est à craindre, si V. M. ne nous fait pas la déclaration que je sollicite.

Ich. Du même droit que Vous assurez que l'Emp. ne reviendra jamais sur la candidature Hohenzollern, je pourrais assurer moi, que la communication faite par le Prince père a vidé pour jamais la question de cette candidature.

Nach einer momentanen Pause sagte

B. Eh bien! Sire, je peux écrire à mon gouvernement que V. M. a consenti de déclarer qu'Elle ne permettra jamais au Pr. Leopold de revenir sur la candidature en question?

Ich trat bei diesen Worten einige Schritte züruck und sagte in sehr ernstem Tone:

Il me semble, Mr. l'Ambassadeur, que je me suis expliqué si clairement et si nettement que je ne pourrais jamais faire une déclaration pareille, que je n'ai plus rien à ajouter. Dabei zog ich meinen Huth ab und ging fort. W.

Das Weitere enthalten Prz. Radziwills Aufzeichnungen.

No. 263

Memorandum of King William[1] "Der 15te July in Ems"[2]

Im Laufe des 13ten July erhielt ich endlich die directe officielle Anzeige des Fürsten Hohenzollern, dass sein Sohn, Angesichts des unerhörten Verhaltens des französischen Gouvernements wegen seiner Candidatur zum Spanischen Thron, sofort seine Resignation auf denselben in Madrid eingereicht habe und dieselbe dort sofort angenommen worden sei. Meine Schilderung der fast insolenten Forderung Benedettis vom 13ten July, zusammenhaltend mit einer noch insolenteren Forderung des Herzogs von Gramont an den Botschafter von Werther, "dass ich selbst eine schriftliche Erklärung abgeben solle, in der ich erklärte, dass es mir leid thäte, ohne Vorwissen Frankreichs, die Hohenzollernsche Candidatur aufgenommen zu haben," — so wie das sich in Paris stündlich steigernde Geschrei nach Krieg, — bewog mich zum Entschluss, Ems zu verlassen und nach Berlin zurückzukehren. Bestärkt wurde ich hierin durch ein Telegramm des Fst. Bismarck, der meine Rückkehr für unerlässlich erklärte. Ich bestimmte meine Abreise auf den 15ten. Am 14ten fuhr ich nach Coblenz, um mit der Königin Alles zu besprechen was der Moment Ernstes enthielte und forderte. Sie sah meine Abreise gleichfalls als unbedingt geboten. Nach dem Diner gingen wir in die Anlagen, wo fast alle Officiere anwesend waren und alle näheren Bekannten aller Stände. Es war ein feierlicher Augenblick, als ich Abschied nehmend mich zu Allen verneigte und der General von Herwarth mir laut zurief: Wir werden Alle mit Ehren vor Ihnen bestehen! Unter heissen Thränen umarmte ich die Königin und fuhr nach Ems zurück!

Am 15ten früh 8 Uhr verliess ich Ems, auf dem Bahnhof von unzähligen Menschen umringt und von so vielen Bekannten

[1] Printed by Herman Granier in the *Festschrift der Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft*, pp. 275–278.

[2] This memorandum was probably drawn up in the first half of 1871 — at all events, after March 21, 1871, when Bismarck received the title of Prince.

wehmüthigen Abschied nehmend! Mit so schwerem Herzen trat ich diese entscheidende Reise an! Ich war auf nichts weniger gefasst als auf die Stimmung, die ich auf der ganzen Reise finden sollte. Statt des Ernstes, den ich auf jedem Gesicht zu lesen gedachte, bei der Aussicht auf einen vielleicht sehr blutigen Krieg, fand ich schon bei dem kleinen Städtchen Nassau eine jubelnde Menge, was mit meiner sehr ernsten Gemüthsstimmung fast unangenehm contrastirte! Aber je weiter ich kam, fand ich dieselben Ausbrüche von Jubel, der in den Städten Limburg, Wetzlar, Giessen u. s. w. sich fortwährend steigerte, so dass ich zu meinen Umgebungen sagte, dass ich diese Stimmung garnicht begriffe. Aber natürlich kamen wir darin überein, dass sie von dem lang verhaltenen Gefühl [herrühre], sich wieder einmal mit Deutschlands Erbfeind messen zu müssen, der auf die frivolste und unerhörteste Art uns den Fehde-Handschuh hinwarf! In Cassel, wo dinirt ward, fand der Jubel kaum Grenzen mehr, und hörte ich nun erst von der versammelten Generalität, dass das Bekanntwerden der seitdem die "Benedettische Rencontre" bezeichneten Scene diese Stimmung erzeuge, und nur ein Gedanke alle Gemüther beherrsche, dass zu den Waffen gegriffen werden müsse! Da bei jedem Halt des Eisenbahnzugs eine Menge von Télégrammen und Dépèchen meiner warteten, so nahm ich den Leg. Rath Abeken und den Chiffreur in mein Coupé, so dass die ganze Reise hindurch gelesen, Beschlüsse gefasst, chiffrirt und dechiffrirt werden musste, so dass beide Herren halb todt waren. Je näher wir Berlin kamen, je höher stieg diese gehobene patriotische Stimmung. In Brandenburg kam mir mein Sohn, Fürst Bismarck, Kriegs-Minister Roon und General v. Moltke entgegen, um noch vor Berlin Alles was sich so Unerwartetes und Unerhörtes ereignet hatte, zu besprechen! Ich bestimmte am anderen Tage den 16ten einen Minister-Conseil zu halten, um über die sich vorbereitende Crisis eine Berathung zu halten und die nöthig scheinenden Entschlüsse zu fassen. Ich ahndete nicht, dass der wichtigste und entscheidenste Entschluss schon nach wenigen Minuten zu fassen sein würde! — Um 1/2 8 Uhr trafen wir in Berlin ein. Unendlich viel jubelnde Menschen empfingen mich auf dem interimistischen Potsdamer Bahnhof. Alle Prinzen,

das Staats-Ministerium, ein Theil des Magistrats, viele Generale und sonstige Bekannte empfingen mich auf dem Perron. Nach den ernsten Begrüssungs-Worten, sprach ich meine Ueberraschung aus, auch in Berlin so viel Enthusiasmus anzutreffen, da wir doch einer sehr ernsten Zukunft entgegen gingen. Ich erhielt, während ich in das Empfangs-Zimmer trat, dieselben Aufschlüsse wie in Cassel und mein Bruder Carl sagte: Mache Dich nur gefasst, was Du erst in der Stadt sehen wirst! Da trat der Fürst Bismarck in das Zimmer, um mir ein Télégramm zu überreichen, welches ihm beim Aussteigen aus dem Wagen gegeben worden war. Es enthielt mit wenig Worten die Kriegsathmende Rede des Herzogs von Gramont, die er morgens in Paris in der Kammer gehalten hatte, die der Fürst verlas, unter allgemeinem Erstaunen. Aber noch ehe eine Discussion sich entspinnen konnte, brachte der Unter-Staats-Secretair Thile ein 2tes Télégramm, dem Fürsten sagend: es enthält ausführlich die Rede Gramonts. Der Fürst wollte sie vorlesen, was ihm bei schlechter Beleuchtung zu schwer wurde, so dass mein Sohn sie nahm, unter den Gaskronleuchter trat und sie laut vorlas, die dann die Aussprüche enthielt, dass der Krieg unvermeidlich sei, da Frankreichs Ehre verletzt sei durch meine Behandlung des Ambassadeurs Benedetti u. s. w. Als das Télégramm verlesen war, drehte ich mich zum Fürsten Bismarck, Gl. Roon, Moltke und meinem Sohn um und fragte: Wissen Sie eine andere Antwort auf eine solche Sprache, als die Mobil-Machung der ganzen Armee? Einstimmig antworteten Alle Vier: Nein, es giebt keine andere Antwort! Ich: Nun so erwarte ich Sie, den Kriegs-Minister, in einer Stunde mit der Mobilmachungs-Ordre bei mir! Gl. von Roon: Welches soll der erste Mobilmachungstag sein? Ich: morgen der 16te July. — Somit waren in Zeit von noch nicht 10 Minuten seit meiner Ankunft die Würfel geworfen! Mein Sohn umarmte mich tief ergriffen! Darauf wandte ich mich zu allen Anwesenden und sprach sehr bewegt: Nun, meine Herren, Sie haben die herausfordernde Sprache Frankreichs gehört; ich aber antworte mit der Mobilmachung der Armee, die ich in diesem Augenblick befohlen habe! Nun Gott befohlen! Damit verliess ich das Zimmer, bestieg mit meinem Sohn den Wagen, um nach dem

Palais zu fahren. Aber Alles was ich bisher an diesem unvergesslichen, welthistorischen Tag gesehen hatte und an Enthusiasmus erlebt hatte, reichte nicht an das was sich nun meinen Augen darbot! Vom Bahnhof aus, am Canal, die [Link-]Strasse entlang Kopf an Kopf; dazu in der Königgrätzer Strasse Wagen an Wagen; Equipage an Equipage längs der ganzen Süd-Seite der Linden; die Nord-Seite derselben auf der Mittel-Promenade und der Strassendamm so voll Menschen, dass kaum durchzukommen war; alle Fenster voll Menschen, Tücher schwenkend, fortwährendes betäubendes Hurrah! Ich war so erschüttert und ergriffen, dass ich zu meinem Sohn sagte: Und das Alles vor einem Kriege!? Nur ein Gedanke und Gefühl bemeisterte sich meiner: Welche Erwartungen bedeutet dieser Empfang!! So kam ich auf die Rampe des Palais; der ganze Opernplatz unabsehbar Kopf an Kopf mit Menschen besetzt. Ich sprang aus der Kalesche, trat an die Balustrade und dankte mit Hand und Helm schwenkend, dem nicht enden wollenden Jubel! Das Publikum füllte die Rampen-Aufgänge; links von mir waren 11 Officiere der Garde mit vorgedrungen, die den Raum vor mir frei hielten; ich wandte mich zu ihnen sagend: Die Erwartungen, die der Jubel des Volks ausspricht, sind Sie nun berufen in Erfüllung gehen zu lassen, ich habe so eben die Mobilmachung befohlen! Die Antwort ist gewesen, dass fünf von ihnen vor dem Feind gefallen sind und 6 das eiserne Kreuz tragen!! — So betrat ich nun meine Wohnung! Oftmals musste ich dem Jubel nachgeben und mich immer wieder am Fenster zeigen! — Um 1/2 10 Uhr kam der Fürst Bismarck und der Kriegs-Minister Roon und legte dieser mir die Mobilmachungs-Ordre vor, die ich unterschrieb, und sie zurückgebend sagte: Nur 5 Zeilen, aber was bedeuten sie!! — So endigte dieser Tag, der einer der merkwürdigsten meines Lebens ward und der entscheidenste für meine und des Vaterlandes ganze Zukunft!!! Ich telegraphirte der Königin und ging dann erschöpft, erschüttert, dankbar und — hoffend zur Ruhe!

W.

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